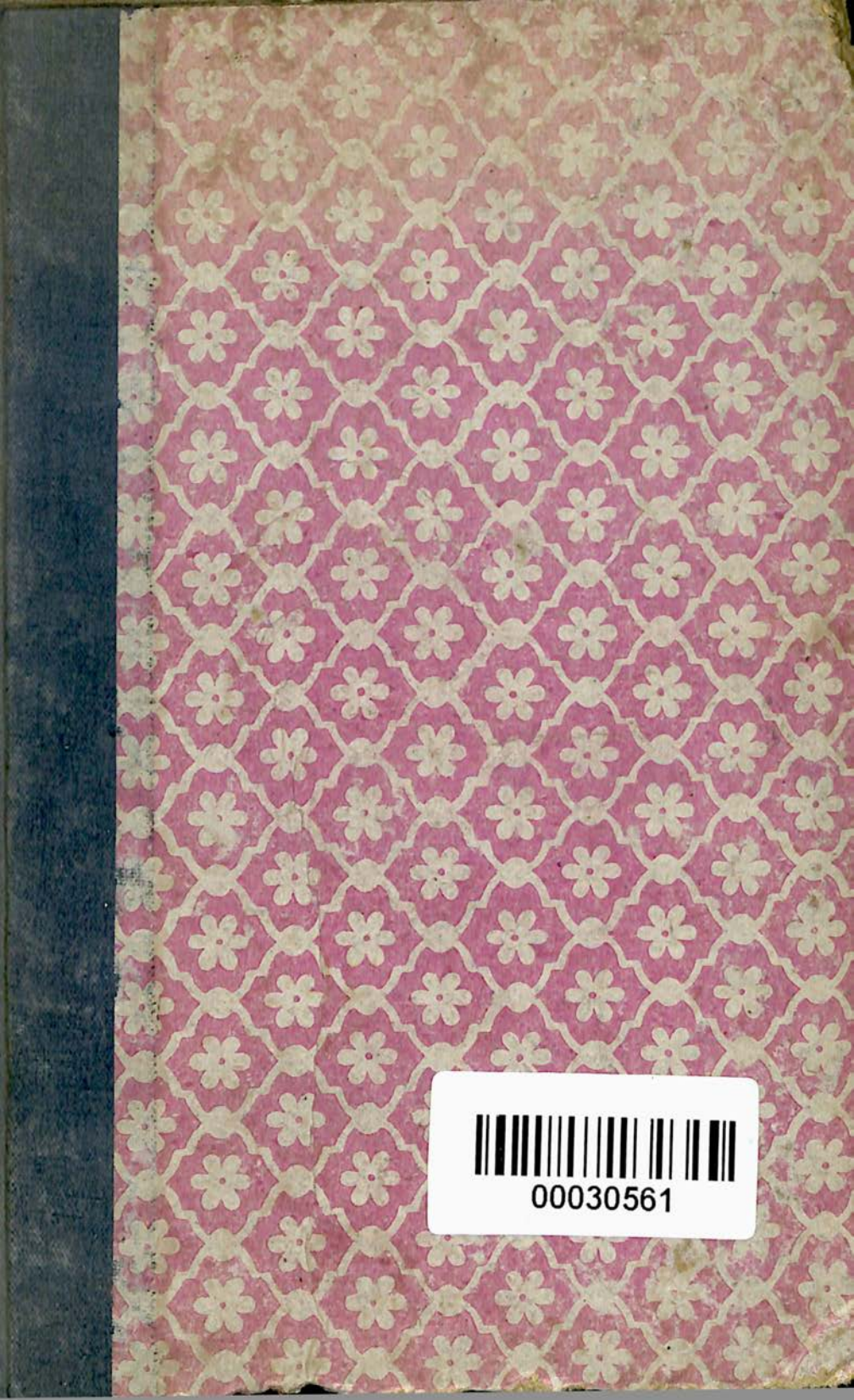
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THE

MILITARY LIFE

OF

OHN DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

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BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF EUROPE."

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON.
MDCCCXLVIII.

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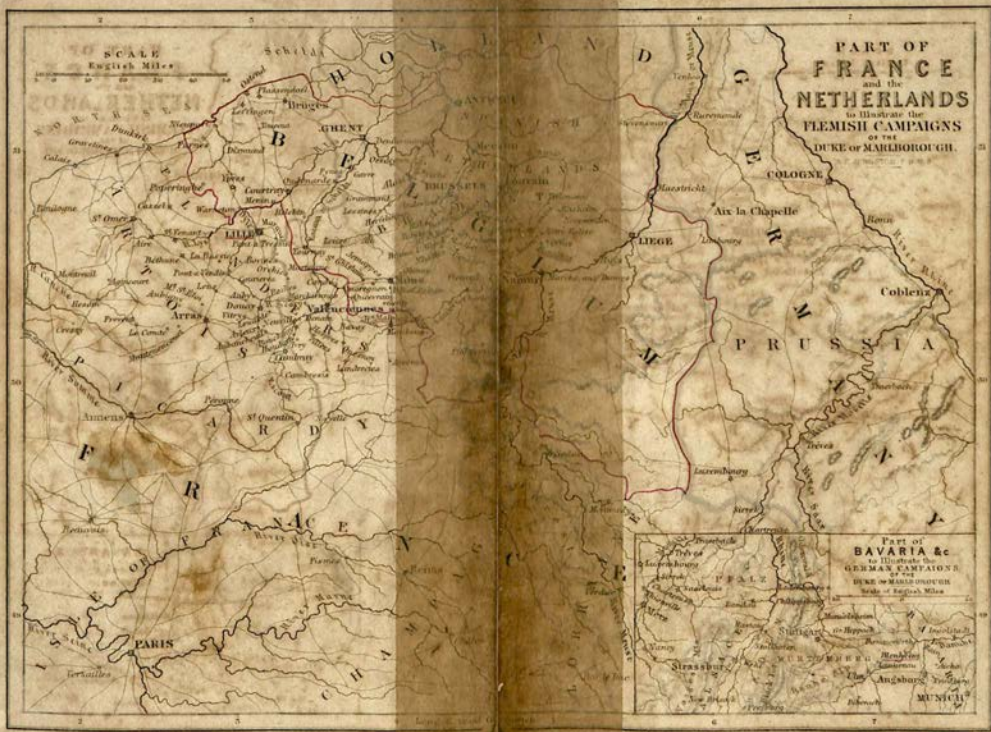
PART OF
FRANCE
and the
NETHERLANDS
to illustrate the
FLEMISH CAMPAIGNS
OF THE
DUKE of MARLBOROUGH.
SCALE
English Miles
Schelde
Bruges
GHENT
BRUSSELS
LILLE
Valenciennes
Arras
Amiens
St Quentin
Cambray
PARIS
COLOGNE
Aix la Chapelle
LIEGE
Maestricht
Coblentz
PRUSSIA
Luxembourg
Treves
Part of
BAVARIA &c
to Illustrate the
GERMAN CAMPAIGNS
OF THE
DUKE of MARLBOROUGH
Scale of English Miles
Strassburg
Stuttgard
Augsburg
MUNICH

Ordinary readers are not aware of this. When they take up a volume of Despatches, they expect to be as much fascinated by it as they are by the correspondence of Madame de Sevigné, Cowper, Gibbon, or Arnold. They will soon find their mistake: the booksellers will ere long find it in the sale of such works. The matter-of-fact men in ordinary life, and the compilers and drudges in literature—that is, nine-tenths of the readers and writers in the world—are never weary of descanting on the inestimable importance of authentic documents for history; and without doubt they are right, so far as the collecting of materials goes. There must be quarriers before there can be architects: the hewers of wood and drawers of water are the basis of all civilisation. But they are not civilisation itself, they are its pioneers. Truth is essential to an estimable character: but many a man is insupportably dull who never told a falsehood.

It was the perusal of these Despatches when they first appeared, which first suggested to the author the composition of the following pages. He was strongly impressed with the greatness of Marlborough's military talents, and the close analogy which many of his exploits bore to those of illustrious generals in subsequent times, whose deeds had long occupied his attention. Having no intention, however, of making a book on the subject, the sketches he composed were at first published in numbers in *Blackwood's Magazine* during the years 1845 and 1846. The favourable manner in which the series was received, and the increasing interest the Author felt in the subject, suggested the idea of uniting them together, and forming a military

biography of the great General, of such moderate dimensions as might neither exhaust the patience, nor too severely tax the purses of that class to whom it is of most value—the young men who are to succeed Marlborough in the noble profession to which he has given so much lustre. The interest of the Spanish question, so prominently brought forward in recent times by the Montpensier alliance, suggested the chapter on the treaty of Utrecht, with which the present volume closes, and which has not previously appeared.

The Map illustrative of the Campaigns of Marlborough is constructed with the greatest care; and is so arranged as to show the positions of every place in strict accordance with the text: while the Plans of Battles, so essential to the elucidation of Military History, have been accurately reduced, and improved by the addition of the names of Commanders, &c., from the great German work of Kausler, so well known from the splendour of its finishing and the accuracy of its details.

As the work is essentially military and political, it has been deemed advisable not to enter minutely into the complicated domestic events of Queen Anne's reign, or to represent the changes of party in the English cabinet toward its close, which produced fresh and important effects on the fate of the war, and the destinies of Europe, as it is believed they were the result rather of great principles contending in the nation for the mastery, than of those intrigues in the palace to which they have in general been almost exclusively ascribed.

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THE LIFE

OF

MARLBOROUGH.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EARLY HISTORY OF MARLBOROUGH.—HIS SHARE IN THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.—CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE WAR OF THE SUCCESSION.

1. Birth and early Life of Marlborough.

JOHN CHURCHILL, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, was born on the 5th July 1650, (new style,) at Ash, in the county of Devon. His father was Sir Winston Churchill, a gallant cavalier who had drawn his sword in behalf of Charles I., and had in consequence been deprived of his fortune and driven into exile by Cromwell. His paternal family was very ancient, and boasted its descent from the *Courcils* de Poitou, who came into England with the Conqueror. His mother was Elizabeth Drake, who claimed a collateral connexion with the descendants of the illustrious Sir Francis Drake, the great navigator. Young Churchill received the rudiments of his education from the parish clergyman in Devonshire, from whom he imbibed that firm attachment to the

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Protestant faith by which he was ever afterwards distinguished, and which determined his conduct in the most important crisis of his life. He was afterwards placed at the school of St Paul's; and it was there that he first discovered, on reading Vegetius, that his bent of mind was decidedly for the military life. "What is usually called genius," says Johnson, "is nothing but strong natural parts accidentally turned in one direction." Like many other men destined to future distinction, he made no great figure as a scholar, a circumstance easily explained, if we recollect that it is on the knowledge of words that the reputation of a schoolboy is founded—of a man on that of things. But the Despatches now published demonstrate that, before he attained middle life, he was a proficient in at least Latin, French, and English composition; for letters in each, written in a very pure style, are to be found in all parts of his correspondence.

2. His first appearance and early promotion at Court.

From his first youth, young Churchill was distinguished by the elegance of his manners and the beauty of his countenance and figure — advantages which, coupled with the known loyal principles and the sufferings of his father in the royal cause, procured for him, at the early age of fifteen, the situation of page in the household of the Duke of York, afterwards James II. His inclination for arms was then so decided, that that prince procured for him a commission in one of the regiments of Guards when he was only sixteen years old. His uncommonly handsome figure then attracted no small share of notice from the

beauties of the court of Charles II., and even awakened a passion in one of the royal mistresses herself. Impatient to signalise himself, however, he left their seductions, and embarked as a volunteer in the expedition against Tangiers in 1666. Thus his first essay in arms was made in actions against the Moors. Having returned to Great Britain, he attracted the notice of the Countess of Castlemaine, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, then the favourite mistress of Charles II., who had distinguished him by her regard before he embarked for Africa, and who made him a present of £5000, with which the young soldier bought an annuity of £500, which laid the foundation, says Chesterfield, of all his subsequent fortunes. Charles, to remove a dangerous rival in her unsteady affections, gave him a company in the Guards, and sent him to the Continent with the auxiliary force which, in those days of English humiliation, the cabinet of St James's furnished to Louis XIV. to aid him in subduing the United Provinces. Thus, by a singular coincidence, it was under Turenne, Condé, and Vauban that the future conqueror of the Bourbons first learned the art of scientific warfare. Wellington went through the same discipline, but in the inverse order: his first campaigns were made against the French in Flanders, his next against the bastions of Tippoo and the Mahratta horse in Hindostan.

3. His services under Louis XIV. and Turenne in Flanders.

Churchill had not been long in Flanders, before his talents and gallantry won for him deserved distinction. The campaign of 1672, which brought the French armies to the gates of Amsterdam, and placed the

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United Provinces within a hair's-breadth of destruction, was to him fruitful in valuable lessons. He distinguished himself afterwards so much at the siege of Nimeguen, that Turenne, who constantly called him by the *soubriquet* of "the handsome Englishman," predicted that he would one day be a great man. In the following year he had the good fortune to save the life of his colonel, the Duke of Monmouth; and acquired so much renown at the siege of Maestricht, that Louis XIV. publicly thanked him at the head of his army, and promised him his powerful influence with Charles II. for future promotion. He little thought what a formidable enemy he was then fostering at the court of his obsequious brother sovereign. The result of Louis XIV.'s intercession was, that Churchill was made lieutenant-colonel; and he continued to serve with the English auxiliary force in Flanders, under the French generals, till 1677, when he returned with his regiment to London. Beyond all doubt it was these five years' service under the great masters of the military art, who then sustained the power and cast a halo round the crown of Louis XIV., which rendered Marlborough the consummate commander that he showed himself to have become, from the moment he was placed at the head of the Allied armies. One of the most interesting and instructive lessons to be learned from biography is derived from observing the long steps, the vast amount of previous preparation, the numerous changes, some prosperous, others adverse, by which the powers of a great man are formed, and he is prepared for playing the important part which it is

intended he should perform on the theatre of the world. Providence does nothing in vain, and when it has selected a particular mind for a great achievement, the events which happen to it all seem to conspire in a mysterious way for its development. Were any one omitted, some essential quality in the character of the future hero, statesman, or philosopher would be found to be awanting.

4. Manner in which Louis XIV.'s ambition worked out its own ruin.

Here also, as in every other period of history, we may see how unprincipled ambition overvaults itself, and the measures which seem at first sight most securely to establish its oppressive reign, are the as yet unperceived means by which an overruling Power works out its destruction. Doubtless the other ministers of Louis XIV. deemed their master's power secure when this English alliance was concluded; when the English monarch had become a state pensioner of the court of Versailles; when a secret treaty had united them by apparently indissoluble bonds; when the ministers alike with the patriots of England were corrupted by his bribes; when the dreaded fleets of Britain were to be seen in union with those of France, leagued to overpower the squadrons of an inconsiderable republic; when the descendants of the conquerors of Cressy, Poitiers, and Azincour stood side by side with the successors of the vanquished in those disastrous fields, ready to achieve the conquest of Flanders and Holland. Without doubt, so far as human foresight could go, Louvois and Colbert were right. Nothing could appear so decidedly calculated to fix the power of Louis XIV., on an immovable foundation. But how vain are the calculations of the great human

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intellects, when put in opposition to the overruling will of Omnipotence! It was that very English alliance which ruined Louis XIV., as the Austrian alliance and marriage, which seemed to put the keystone in the arch of his greatness, afterwards ruined Napoleon. By the effect, and one of the most desired effects, of the English alliance, a strong body of British auxiliaries were sent to Flanders; the English officers learned the theory and practice of war in the best of all schools, and under the best of all teachers; that ignorance of the military art, the result in every age of our insular situation, and which generally causes the first four or five years of every war to terminate in disaster, was for the time removed; and that mighty genius was developed under the eye of Louis XIV., and by the example of Turenne, which was destined to hurl back to its own frontiers the tide of Gallic invasion, and close in mourning the reign of the *Grand Monarque*. "Les hommes agissent," says Bossuet, "mais Dieu les mène."

5 Churchill's marriage and rapid rise at court.

Upon Churchill's return to London, the brilliant reputation which had preceded, and the even augmented personal advantages which accompanied him, immediately rendered him the idol of beauty and fashion. The ladies of the palace vied for his homage—the nobles of the land hastened to cultivate his society. Like Julius Cæsar, he was carried away by the stream, and plunged into the vortex of courtly dissipation with the ardour which marks an energetic character in the pursuit either of good or evil. The elegance of his person and manners, and the charms of his conversation,

prevailed so far with Charles II. and the Duke of York, that soon after, though not yet thirty years of age, he obtained a regiment. In 1680 he married the celebrated Sarah Jennings, the favourite lady in attendance on the Princess Anne, second daughter of the Duke of York, one of the most admired beauties of the court. This alliance increased his influence, already great, with that Prince, and laid the foundation of the future grandeur of his fortunes. Shortly after his marriage he accompanied the Duke of York to Scotland, in the course of which they were both nearly shipwrecked on the coast of Fife. On this occasion the Duke made the greatest efforts to preserve his favourite's life, and succeeded in doing so, although the danger was such that many of the Scottish nobles perished under his eye. On their return to London in 1682, Churchill was presented by his patron to the King, who made him colonel of the third regiment of Guards. When the Duke of York ascended the throne in 1685, on the demise of his brother, Churchill kept his place as one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and was raised to the rank of brigadier-general. He was sent to Paris, to notify his sovereign's accession to Louis XIV., and on his return he was created a peer by the title of Baron Churchill of Sandbridge, in the county of Hertford—a title which he took from an estate there which he had acquired in right of his wife.

6. His important services on Monmouth's rebellion.

On the revolt of the Duke of Monmouth, he had an opportunity of showing at once his military ability, and, by a signal service, his gratitude to his benefactor.

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Lord Feversham had the command of the royal forces, and Churchill was his major-general. The general-in-chief, however, kept so bad a look-out, that he was on the point of being surprised and cut to pieces by the rebel forces, who, on this occasion at least, were conducted with ability. The general and almost all his officers were in their beds, and sound asleep, when Monmouth, at the head of all his forces, silently issued from his camp, and suddenly fell on the royal army. The rout would have been complete, and James II. probably dethroned, had not Churchill, whose vigilant eye nothing escaped, observed the movement, and hastily collected a handful of men, with whom he made so vigorous a resistance as gave time for the remainder of the army to form, and repel this well-concerted enterprise.

7. His endeavours to arrest the headlong course of James.

Churchill's mind was too sagacious, and his knowledge of the feelings of the nation too extensive, not to be aware of the perilous nature of the course upon which James soon after adventured, in endeavouring to bring about, if not the absolute re-establishment of the Catholic religion, at least such a quasi-establishment of it as the people deemed, and probably with reason, was, with so aspiring a body of ecclesiastics, in effect the same thing. When he saw the headstrong monarch break through all bonds, and openly trample on the liberties, while he shocked the religious feelings of his people, he wrote to him to point out, in firm but respectful terms, the danger of his conduct. He declared to Lord Galway, when James's innovations began, that if he persisted in his design of overturning the constitution and

religion of his country, he would leave his service. So far his conduct was perfectly unexceptionable. Our first duty is to our country, our second only to our benefactor. If they are brought into collision, as they often are during the melancholy vicissitudes of a civil war, an honourable man, whatever it may cost him, has but one part to take. He must not abandon his public duty for his private feelings, but he must never betray official duty. If Churchill, perceiving the frantic course of his master, had withdrawn from his service, and then either taken no part in the revolution which followed, or even appeared in arms against him, the most scrupulous moralist could have discovered nothing reprehensible in his conduct. History has in every age applauded the virtue, while it has commiserated the anguish, of the elder Brutus, who sacrificed his sons to the perhaps too rigorous laws of his country.

8. He deserts James II. on the invasion of the Prince of Orange.

But Churchill did not do this, and thence has arisen an ineffaceable blot on his memory. He did not relinquish the service of the infatuated monarch; he retained his office and commands; but he employed the influence and authority thence derived, to ruin his benefactor. Information was sent to James, that he was not to be trusted; but so far were those representations from having inspired any doubts of his fidelity, that that deluded Monarch, when the Prince of Orange landed, confided to him the command of a corps of five thousand men destined to oppose his progress, and raised him to the rank of Lieutenant-general. He led this force in person as far as Salisbury to meet William, who was

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advancing through Devonshire. And yet he had before that written to William a letter, still extant, in which he expressed entire devotion to his cause.* Nay, he at this time, if we may believe his panegyrist Ledyard, signed a letter, along with several other peers, addressed to the Prince of Orange, inviting him to come over, and had actually concluded with Major-general Kirk, who commanded at Axminster, a convention, for the seizure of the king and giving him up to his hostile son-in-law. James was secretly warned that Churchill was about to betray him, but he refused to believe it of one from whom he had hitherto experienced such devotion, and was only wakened from his dream of security by learning that his favourite had gone over, with the Duke of Grafton and the principal officers of his regiment, to the Prince of Orange. Not content with this, he shortly after employed his influence with his own regiment, and others stationed near London, to induce them to desert James and join the invading candidate for the throne.†

* "Sir,—Mr Sidney will let you know how I intend to behave myself. I think it is what I owe to God and my country. My honour I take leave to put into your highness's hands, where I think it is safe. If you think there is any thing which I ought to do, you have but to command me. I shall pay *an entire obedience to it*, being resolved to die in that religion that it hath pleased God to give you both the will and the power to protect." Lord Churchill to the Prince of Orange, Aug. 4, 1688.—William landed at Torbay on Nov. 5, 1688, so that three months before Marlborough accepted the command of the forces destined to oppose, he had secretly agreed to join him.—See Gleig's *Military Commanders*, i. 332.

† On the approach of William to the capital, and the flight of James to Feversham, Lord Churchill was sent forward to reassemble his own troop of Horse Guards, and to bring over the soldiers quartered in

Nay it was his arguments, joined to those of his wife, which induced James's own daughter, the Princess Anne, and Prince George of Denmark, to detach themselves from the cause of the falling monarch; and drew from that unhappy sovereign the mournful exclamation, "My God! my very children have forsaken me." Thus his example was the signal for a general defection, not only of those who were openly hostile to James, but even of those who were connected with him by blood.

9. Parallel between his treachery and that of Ney.

In what does this conduct differ from that of Labedoyère, who, at the head of the garrison of Grenoble, deserted to Napoleon when sent out to oppose him? — or Lavalette, who employed his influence, as postmaster under Louis XVIII., to forward the Imperial conspiracy? — or Marshal Ney, who, after promising at the Tuileries to bring the ex-emperor back in an iron cage, no sooner reached the royal camp at Melun, than he issued a proclamation calling on the troops to desert the Bourbons, and mount the tricolor cockade? Nay, is not Churchill's conduct, in a moral point of view, worse than that of Ney? for the latter abandoned the trust reposed in him by a new master, forced upon an unwilling nation, to rejoin his old benefactor and companion in arms; but the former betrayed the trust reposed in him by his old master and tried benefactor, to range himself under the banner of a competitor for the throne, to

and about the metropolis. He executed the commission with equal prudence and activity, and carried back so favourable a report concerning the dispositions of the people and army as induced the Prince to hasten to the capital. After the discomfiture of James, Lord Churchill assisted in the convention of Parliament. Coxe, v. 42.

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whom he was bound neither by duty nor obligation. And yet, such is often the inequality of crimes and punishments in this world, that Churchill was raised to the pinnacle of greatness by the very conduct which consigned Ney, with justice, so far as his conduct is concerned, to an ignominious death.

> "Treason ne'er prospers; for when it does,
> None dare call it treason."

History forgets its first and noblest duty when it fails, by its distribution of praise and blame, to counterbalance, so far as its verdict can, this inequality, which, for inscrutable but doubtless wise purposes, Providence has permitted in this transient scene. Charity forbids us to scrutinise such conduct too severely. It is the deplorable consequence of a successful revolution, even when commenced for the most necessary purposes, to obliterate the ideas of man on right and wrong, and to leave no other test in the general case for public conduct but success: its first effect, to place men in such trying circumstances that nothing but the most confirmed and resolute virtue can pass unscathed through the ordeal. He knew the human heart well, who commanded us in our daily prayers to supplicate not to be led into temptation, even before asking for deliverance from evil. Let no man be sure, however much, on a calm survey, he may condemn the conduct of Marlborough and Ney, that in similar circumstances he would not have done the same.*

* Marlborough, on leaving the king, sent the following letter to him:— "Sir,—Since men are seldom suspected of sincerity when they

10. Honours and commands bestowed on Churchill. He signs the Act of association in favour of William.

The magnitude of the service rendered by Churchill to the Prince of Orange, immediately appeared in the commands conferred upon him. Hardly was he settled at William's head-quarters when he was despatched to London to assume the command of the Horse Guards; and, while there, he signed, on the 20th December, 1688, the famous Act of Association in favour of the Prince of Orange. Shortly after, he was named lieutenant-general of the armies of William, and immediately made a new organisation of the troops, under officers whom he could trust, which proved of the utmost service to William on the unstable throne on which he was

act contrary to their interests, and though my dutiful behaviour to your Majesty in the worst of times (for which I acknowledge my poor services much overpaid) may not be sufficient to incline you to a charitable interpretation of my actions; yet I hope the great advantage I enjoy under your Majesty, which I cannot expect to enjoy under any other Government, may reasonably convince your Majesty and the world that I am actuated by a higher principle, when I offer that violence to my inclination and interest as to desert your Majesty at a time when your affairs seem to challenge the strictest obedience from all your subjects, much more from one who lies under such obligations to your Majesty. This, Sir, could proceed from nothing but the inviolable dictates of my conscience, and a necessary concern for my religion (which no good man can oppose), and with which, I am instructed, nothing can come in competition. Heaven knows with what partiality my dutiful regard for your Majesty has hitherto represented those unhappy dangers which inconsiderate and self-interested men have framed against your Majesty's true interest and the Protestant Religion; but as I can no longer join with such to give a pretence by conduct to bring them to effect, so I will always, with the hazard of my life and fortune (so much your Majesty's due,) endeavour to preserve your royal person and lawful rights, with all the tender concern and dutiful respect that becomes me." — Lord Churchill to James II., Nov. 12, 1688. Ledyard, i. 75.

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soon after seated. He was present at most of the long and momentous debates which took place in the House of Peers on the question on whom the crown should be conferred, and at first inclined to a regency; but with a commendable delicacy he absented himself on the night of the decisive vote on the vacancy of the throne. He voted, however, on the 6th of February for the resolution which settled the crown on William and Mary; and he assisted at their coronation, under the title of Earl of Marlborough, to which he had shortly before been elevated by William.

II. His first services in foreign war under William.

England having, on the accession of the new monarch, joined the continental league against France, Marlborough received the command of the British auxiliary force in the Netherlands, and by his courage and ability contributed in a remarkable manner to the victory of Walcourt. In 1690 he received orders to return from Flanders in order to assume a command in Ireland, then agitated by a general insurrection in favour of James; but, actuated by some remnant of attachment to his old benefactor, he eluded on various pretences complying with the order till the battle of the Boyne had extinguished the hopes of the dethroned monarch, when he came over and made himself master of Cork and Kinsale. In 1691 he was sent again into Flanders, in order to act under the immediate orders of William, who was then, with heroic constancy, contending with the still superior forces of France; but hardly had he landed there when he was arrested, deprived of all his commands, and sent to the Tower of London,

along with several of the noblemen of distinction in the British senate.

12. Discreditable intrigues soon after with the exiled Royal Family.

Upon this part of the history of Marlborough there hangs a veil of mystery, which all the papers brought to light in more recent times have not entirely removed. At the time, his disgrace was by many attributed to some cutting sarcasms in which he had indulged on the predilection of William for the continental troops, and especially the Dutch; by others, to intrigues conducted by Lady Marlborough and him, to obtain for the Princess Anne a larger pension than the King was disposed to allow her. But neither of these causes are sufficient to explain the fall and arrest of a man so eminent as Marlborough, and who had rendered such important services to the newly-established monarch. It would appear from what has transpired in later times, that a much more serious cause had produced the rupture between him and William. The charge brought against him at the time, but not prosecuted, as it was found to rest on false or insufficient evidence, was that of having, along with Lords Salisbury, Cornbury, the Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Basil Ferebrace, signed the scheme of an association for the restoration of James. Sir John Fenwick, who was executed for a treasonable correspondence with James II. shortly after Marlborough's arrest, declared in the course of his trial that he was privy to the design, had received the pardon of the exiled monarch, and had engaged to procure for him the adhesion of the army. The Papers, published by Coxe, rather corroborate the view that he was privy

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to it; and it is supported by those found at Rome in the possession of Cardinal York.* That Marlborough, disgusted with the partiality of William for his Dutch troops, and irritated at the open severity of his government, should have repented of his abandonment of his former sovereign and benefactor, is highly probable. But it can scarcely be taken as an apology for one act of treason, that he meditated the commission of another. It only shows how perilous, in public as in private life, is any deviation from the path of integrity,

* "About a fortnight ago, I wrote a letter to acquaint you with what I had observed of some people, in hopes Mr Arden would have called upon me as he promised; but I did not care to send it by post, so it was burnt. *We had yesterday Sir John Fenwick at the house*, and I think it all went as you could wish. I do not send you the particulars, knowing you must have it more exactly from others; but I should be wanting if I did not let you know that Lord Rochester has behaved himself, on all this occasion, like a friend. In a conversation he had with me, he expressed himself as a real servant of yours; and I think it would not be amiss if you took notice of it to him. *If you think me capable of any commands*, I shall endeavour to approve myself what I am, with much truth," &c.—Marlborough to the Duke of Shrewsbury (a Catholic leader and Royalist.) *Wednesday night*, no date. *Shrewsbury Papers*, and COXE, i. 85.

"During the interval between the liberation of Marlborough and the death of Queen Mary, we find him, in conjunction with Godolphin and many others, maintaining a clandestine intercourse with the exiled family. On the 2d May, 1694, only a few days before he offered his services to King William, he communicated to James, through Colonel Sackville, intelligence of an expedition then fitting out for the purpose of destroying the fleet in Brest harbour."—COXE's *Marlborough*, i. 75. "Marlborough's conduct to the Stuarts," says Lord Mahon, "was a foul blot on his memory. To the last he persevered in those deplorable intrigues. In October, 1713, he protested to a Jacobite agent he would rather have his hands cut off than do any thing to prejudice King James."—MAHON, i. 21, 22.

that it impelled such a man into so tortuous and disreputable a path.

But Marlborough was a man whose services were too valuable to the newly-established dynasty, to be permitted to remain long in disgrace. He was soon liberated from the Tower, as no sufficient evidence of his alleged accession to the conspiracy had been obtained. Several years elapsed, however, before he emerged from the privacy into which he prudently retired on his liberation from confinement. Queen Mary having been carried off by the small-pox on the 17th of January, 1696, Marlborough wisely abstained from even taking part in the debates which followed in Parliament, during which some of the malcontents dropped hints as to the propriety of conferring the crown on his immediate patroness, the Princess Anne. This prudent reserve, together with the absence of any decided proofs at the time of Marlborough's correspondence with James, seems to have at length weakened William's resentment, and by degrees he was taken back into favour. The peace of Ryswick, signed on the 20th of September, 1697, having consolidated the power of that monarch, Marlborough was, on the 19th of June, 1698, made preceptor of the young Duke of Gloucester, his nephew, son of the Princess Anne, and heir-presumptive to the throne; and this appointment, which at once restored his credit at court, was accompanied by the gracious expression — "My lord, make my nephew to resemble yourself, and he will be every thing which I can desire." On the same day he

13. He is liberated from prison, and erelong restored to favour.

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was restored to his rank as a privy councillor, and took the oaths and his seat accordingly.

14. And appointed to the supreme command in the Netherlands.

So fully had he now regained the confidence of William, that he was three times named one of the nine lords justiciars to whom the administration of affairs in Great Britain was subsequently intrusted, during the temporary absence of William in Holland; and the War of the Succession having become certain in the year 1700, that monarch, who was preparing to take an active part in it, appointed Marlborough, on 1st June, 1701, his ambassador-extraordinary at the Hague, and commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in Flanders. This double appointment in effect invested Marlborough with the entire direction of affairs, civil and military, so far as England was concerned, on the Continent. William, who was highly indignant at the recognition of the Chevalier St George as King of England, on the death of his father, James II., in September 1701, was preparing to prosecute the war with the vigour and perseverance which so eminently distinguished his character, when he was carried off by the effects of a fall from his horse, on the 19th March, 1702. But that event made no alteration in the part which England took in the war which was commencing, and it augmented rather than diminished the influence which Marlborough had in its direction. The Princess Anne, with whom, both individually and through Lady Marlborough, he was so intimately connected, mounted the throne, without opposition; and by one of her first acts the Queen bestowed on Marlborough the order of the Garter, confirmed him

in his former offices, and appointed him, in addition, her plenipotentiary at the Hague. War was declared on the 15th May, 1702, and Marlborough immediately went over to the Netherlands to take the command of the Allied army, sixty thousand strong, then lying before Nimeguen, which was threatened by a superior force on the part of the French.

15. At which period the Blenheim Papers commenced.

It is at this period—June, 1702—that the great and memorable, and withal blameless period of Marlborough's life commenced. The next ten years were one unbroken series of efforts, victories, and glory. He arrived in the camp at Nimeguen on the evening of the 2d July, having been a few weeks before at the Hague; and immediately assumed the command. Lord Athlone, who had previously enjoyed that situation, at first laid claim to an equal authority with him; but this ruinous division, which never is safe save with men so great as he and Eugene, and would unquestionably have proved ruinous to the common cause had Athlone been his partner in command, was prevented by the States-General, who insisted upon the undivided direction being conferred on Marlborough. Most fortunately, it is precisely at this period that the Despatches commence, which present an unbroken series of his letters to persons of every description down to his dismissal from office in May, 1712. They thus embrace the early successes in Flanders, the cross march into Bavaria and battle of Blenheim, the expulsion of the French from Germany, the battle of Ramillies, and taking of Brussels and Antwerp, the mission to the King of Sweden at Dresden, the battle

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of Almanza in Spain, those of Oudenarde, Malplaquet, and all the sieges in Flanders, and all the important events of the war down to its close. More weighty and momentous materials for history never were presented to the public; and their importance will not be properly appreciated, if the previous condition of Europe, and imminent hazard to the independence of all the adjoining states from the unmeasured ambition and vast power of Louis XIV. are not taken into consideration.

16. Great power of the Bourbons at this period, and general alarm which it excited.

Accustomed as we are to regard the Bourbons as a fallen and unfortunate race, the objects rather of commiseration than apprehension, and Napoleon as the only sovereign who has really threatened our independence, and all but effected the subjugation of the Continent, we can scarcely conceive the terror with which, a century and a half ago, the monarch of that race, with reason, inspired all Europe, or the narrow escape which the continental states, at least, then made from being reduced to the condition of provinces of France. The forces of that monarchy, at all times formidable to its neighbours, from the warlike spirit of its inhabitants, and their rapacious disposition, conspicuous alike in the earliest and the latest times;* its central situation, forming, as it were, the salient angle of a bastion projecting into the centre of Germany; and its numerous population,—were then, in a peculiar manner, to be dreaded, from the concentration of the elements of power thus afforded in the hands of an able and ambitious monarch, who had

* "Galli turpe esse ducunt frumentum manu quærere; itaque armati alienos agros demetunt."—CÆSAR.

succeeded for the first time, for two hundred years, in healing the divisions and stilling the feuds of its nobles, and turning their buoyant energy into the channel of foreign conquest. Immense was the force which, in consequence of this able policy, was found to exist in France, and terrible the danger to which it at once exposed the neighbouring states.

17. Vast ability by which the government of France was directed.

France was rendered the more formidable in the time of Louis XIV., from the remarkable talents which he himself possessed, and the unbounded ambition by which he was actuated, the extraordinary concentration of talent which his discernment or good fortune had collected around his throne, and the consummate abilities, civil and military, with which affairs were directed. Turenne, Boufflers, and Condé, were his generals; Vauban was his engineer, Louvois and Torcy were his statesmen. The lustre of the exploits of these illustrious men, in itself great, was much enhanced by the still greater blaze of fame which encircled his throne, from the genius of the literary men who have given such immortal celebrity to his reign. Corneille and Racine were his tragedians; Molière wrote his comedies; Bossuet, Fénélon, and Bourdaloue were his theologians; Massillon his preacher; Boileau his critic; Le Notre laid out his gardens; Le Brun painted his halls. Greatness had come upon France, as, in truth, it does to most other states, in all departments at the same time; and the adjoining nations, alike intimidated by a power which they could not resist, and dazzled by a glory which they could not emulate, had come almost to despair of main-

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taining their independence ; and were sinking into that state of apathy, which is at once the consequence and the cause of extraordinary reverses.

18. Extraordinary success which had hitherto attended Louis in all his enterprises.

The influence of these causes had distinctly appeared in the extraordinary good fortune which had attended the enterprises of Louis, and the numerous conquests he had made since he had launched into the career of foreign aggrandisement. Nothing had been able to resist his victorious arms. At the head of an army of a hundred thousand men, directed by Turenne, he had speedily overrun Flanders. Its fortified cities yielded to the science of Vauban, or the terrors of his name. The boasted barrier of the Netherlands was passed in a few weeks ; hardly any of its far-famed fortresses made any resistance. The passage of the Rhine was achieved under the eyes of the monarch with little loss, and with melo-dramatic effect. One half of Holland was soon subdued, and the presence of the French army at the gates of Amsterdam seemed to presage immediate destruction to the United Provinces ; and, but for the firmness of their leaders, and a fortunate combination of circumstances, unquestionably would have done so. The alliance with England in the early part of his reign, and the junction of the fleets of Britain and France to ruin their fleets and blockade their harbours, seemed to deprive these states of their last resource, derived from their energetic industry. Nor were substantial fruits awanting from these conquests. Alsace and Franche Comté were overrun, and, with Lorraine, permanently annexed to the French monarchy ; and

although, by the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nimeguen, part of the acquisitions of Louis in Flanders were abandoned, enough was retained by the devouring monarchy to deprive the Dutch of the barrier they had so ardently desired, and render their situation to the last degree precarious in the neighbourhood of so formidable a power.

19. Hopes and schemes of the Catholic party throughout Europe at this time. Their ultimate failure.

It was the ambition and detestable cruelty of the Church of Rome which first produced, and probably alone could have produced, a reaction against these dangers. Intoxicated with the success which had in many quarters attended its efforts, and in an especial manner in France, for the extirpation of heresy, its leaders thought nothing could resist their power. The long triumphs and well known orthodoxy of Louis XIV. gave them the greatest hopes that he would employ his vast power and great capacity in effecting that unity in the Church which he had so long laboured to produce in the temporal administration of his monarchy; while the secret inclination of James II., revealed to his spiritual guides, made the leaders of the Romish Church aware that he was resolutely bent on re-establishing the Catholic faith in his dominions, or at least in restoring it to such a degree of power and consideration, as with so aspiring a body would have amounted, in effect, to the same thing. His character—bold, sincere, and enterprising, but withal rash, bigoted, and inconsiderate—appeared to promise the fairest chance of success to such a design. The moment seemed beyond all hope favourable for a general aggression on the Protestant faith; for

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in France was an able and powerful monarch, who considered, and perhaps with reason, unity in religion as indispensable to his great object of centralisation in temporal power; and in England a devout and daring Catholic was on the throne, whose efforts, supported by a considerable party in Great Britain and a very large one in Ireland, promised ere long to render the British empire, hitherto the stronghold of the Reformed, the chief outwork of the ancient faith. The two rival powers, whose jealousy and rival pretensions had so long desolated Europe, and whose opposite creeds had recently still more widely severed them from each other, were now united in close alliance, under governments alike anxious for the restoration of unity in matters of religion. And yet so short-sighted are often the conclusions of human sagacity, even when founded on the most apparently reasonable grounds, or so entirely are they overruled by a Superior Power, that to the consequences of this very aggression may be traced, by a clear chain of causes and effects, the curbing of the power of Louis XIV., and the establishment of the Reformed faith on a solid foundation in the north of Europe.

20. Simultaneous attacks on the Protestants in France and England irrevocably separate the two countries.

The onset of the Church of Rome against that of Luther, commenced in both countries at the same time. In 1685 the edict of Nantes was revoked by Louis XIV., and those sanguinary military executions began which have reflected such disgrace on his reign. In 1687 the persecution of the Protestants, and measures evidently designed for the re-establishment of the Romish faith, commenced in Great Britain. The result was dif-

ferent in the two countries. In France four hundred thousand weeping citizens were sent into exile, who carried into foreign states their industry, their arts, their hatred of Roman Catholic oppression. In England the reigning dynasty was expelled from the throne, and carried to foreign courts the inextinguishable desire to regain its inheritance. Europe was permanently divided by these great events. The wrongs committed, the injuries suffered on both sides, were too great to be forgiven. On the one side was a throne overturned, a race of sovereigns in exile; on the other, were half a million of persecuted human beings wandering in foreign lands. Temporal wrongs of the deepest dye had come to be superadded to religious divisions. Alliances on both sides followed, and revealed the vehement passions which were felt. The League of Augsburg, first signed on 9th July, 1686, united Austria, Spain, Holland, Saxony, Swabia, to which, after the revolution of 1688, was added England, against France; while Louis XIV. contracted an alliance of the closest kind with the exiled James, now established at St Germains, entered into correspondence with the Royalists and Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland, and commenced those dark intrigues at the Court of Madrid which ere long led to the War of the Succession.

21. Efforts of William III. to avert the danger.

The heroic William struggled not in vain for the independence of his country. The distant powers of Europe, at length wakened to a sense of their danger, made strenuous efforts to coerce the ambition of France. The revolution of 1688 had restored England to its natural

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place in the van of the contest for continental freedom; and the peace of Ryswick in 1697 saw the trophies of conquests in some degree more equally balanced between the contending parties. But still it was with difficulty that the alliance kept its ground against Louis; any untoward event, the defection of any considerable power, would at once, it was felt, cast the balance in his favour; and all history had demonstrated how many are the chances against any considerable confederacy keeping for any length of time together, when the immediate danger which had stilled their jealousies, and bound together their separate interests, is in appearance removed. Such was the dubious and anxious state of Europe, when the death of Charles II. at Madrid, on the 1st November, 1700, and the bequest of his vast territories to Philip Duke of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin, and grandson of Louis XIV., threatened at once to place the immense resources of the Castilian monarchy at the disposal of the ambitious monarch of France, whose passion for glory had not diminished with his advancing years, and whose want of moderation was soon evinced by his accepting, after an affected hesitation, the splendid bequest.

22. Manner in which the bequest of Spain to the Duke of Anjou had been obtained

The manner in which this bequest in favour of the Bourbons had been brought about was very curious, and more creditable to the astuteness and ability of the diplomatists of Louis XIV. than either the integrity or foresight of the allied cabinets. At first sight, it seemed the most extraordinary thing imaginable that an Austrian prince, the descendant of Charles V., should have

bequeathed his dominions to the grandson of Louis XIV., the hereditary enemy of his house, in preference to his own family, seated on the archducal throne of Austria. But the secret has been revealed by the publication, in later times, of the secrets of diplomacy, of which Smollett and our earlier writers were either ignorant or which they were guilty of concealing.* It appears that the principal powers of Europe, aware of the approaching demise of the Spanish King without descendants, had come not only to speculate on the chances of the succession, but had actually entered into secret treaties among each other for the partition of his dominions. In this nefarious scheme of spoliation, Louis XIV. and William III. of England took a prominent part, and the accession of Holland was obtained by promising her government a large share of the spoils. The first conference on the subject took place between the Ambassadors of the three great powers at the time of the treaty of Ryswick, and the first formal treaty was signed at the Hague on 11th October, 1698. By it, the Spanish monarchy in the Peninsula was to be ceded to the Prince Electoral of Bavaria, with Flanders and the Low Countries. Naples, Sicily, Tuscany, and Guipuscoa fell to France, and the Duchy of Milan to the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor of Germany. England, to its credit be it said, was to gain nothing by this partition.†

* See SMOLLETT, vol. i. c. vii. § 37, where not a word is said of the formal treaty of partition of Spain.

† See the treaty in *Memoires de Torcy*, P. i. p. 57; SISMONDI, *Hist. de France*, xxvi. 276; and CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis XIV.*, iv. 270-271.

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23. Fresh treaty of partition between France, England, and Holland.

What care soever the contracting parties took to keep this treaty secret, it transpired, and excited, as well it might, the most vehement indignation in the Cabinets of Vienna and Madrid. William secretly informed the Emperor of its signature;* and the result of the deliberations of the Austrian family was, that the King of Spain made a testament, in which he bequeathed his whole dominions to the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, under the solemn injunction to resist any attempt at partition. Had this Prince lived, all the calamities which followed might have been averted, but his death, which happened on the 8th February, 1699, threw every thing open again, and exposed Spain afresh to the cupidity of the allied powers. Negociations again began afresh at the Hague; and on this occasion England became a participator in the expected spoil. The result was a second treaty of partition, signed on 13th March, 1700, at the Hague, between England, France, and Holland, without the privity of the Emperor. By it, the whole Spanish dominions were to be divided between the contracting parties in the following proportions. France was to receive Naples, Sicily, Guipuscoa, and Lorraine; and Archduke Charles, second son of the Archduke of Austria, was to obtain Spain, the Low Countries, and the Indies, on condition of renouncing any other succession. But by secret articles annexed to this treaty, the Spanish Colonies beyond seas were to be divided between England and Holland.† Both of

* Sismondi, xxvi. 277.

† Pars des articles joints du traité, les Colonies Espagnoles etaient cedées à la Grande Bretagne et à la Hollande, seule avantage mate-

the latter powers were at the moment in alliance with Spain, and had fought by her side in the very last war, which lasted from 1689 to 1697. It may safely be affirmed that a more infamous proceeding is not recorded in history; and it reveals the melancholy truth, that the human heart is ever the same under whatever banners it may be enlisted; and that, under the mask of zeal for liberty and the reformed religion, may be concealed ambition as grasping, and perfidy as black, as ever lurked under the crown of kings, or the cowl of priestly tyranny!

24. The knowledge of this treaty of partition determines the King of Spain to the bequest in favour of the Bourbons.

Uniting duplicity toward his new allies, with ambition toward his old enemies, Louis had no sooner concluded this treaty than he secretly caused it to be communicated to Charles II., King of Spain, through his Secretary of State, Abilles. The intelligence threw the declining monarch, as well it might, into the utmost consternation. He addressed in vain the most pressing remonstrances to the Cabinets of Versailles, London, and the Hague, pointing out, in just and emphatic terms, the glaring injustice of friendly and allied powers concluding a treaty for the partition of the dominions of a sovereign before he had yet sunk into the grave. It was all in vain. The ambition of France, England, and Holland, were proof against every consideration of honour, or faith, or justice. The French Ambassador at

rielle qu' elle et l'autre retiraient de ces stipulations. On donnait beaucoup à la France, parceque Louis XIV. reconnaissait Guillaume III. et les gouvernemens nouveaux, qui veulent le faire admettre par les vœux sont obligés à des sacrifices.—CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.*, iv. 277; *Lombardy*, i. 97; SCHODL, ii. 13-14.

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Madrid got orders to quit that capital; the Spanish Ambassador at London received his passports; a large French army was collecting on the Guipuscoa frontier of the Pyrenees. War seemed inevitable; the fate which subsequently befell Poland seemed to threaten Spain the moment its present sovereign should be no more. In this extremity, Charles II. convened his Council of State, and submitted the matter to their decision. By a large majority, they determined that a bequest in favour of the Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV., was the most advisable step, as he was the only monarch capable of preventing a partition; and the old king, sacrificing the partiality of family and race to aroused indignation and sentiments of nationality, consented to do so, and signed the bequest which involved Europe in conflagration.

25. Extent of the danger which threatened the Continental powers from this accession to the power of France.

But though the origin of the evil was to be found in their own unjustifiable ambition, it was not the less real, or deserving of immediate consideration. Threatened with so serious a danger, it is not surprising that the powers of Europe were in the utmost alarm, and ere long took steps to endeavour to avert it. All had injuries to avenge, or inheritances to regain. Austria armed to regain the Spanish succession, reft from its family by the ambition and diplomatic ability of the Cabinet of Versailles. England had a double motive for hostility: she had danger to avert, and the mortification of being duped to avenge. Holland saw the enemy at her gates: the white flag floated on the bastions of Antwerp. Such, however, was the terror inspired by the name of Louis

XIV., and the magnitude of the addition made by this bequest to his power, that the new monarch, in the first instance, ascended the throne of Spain and the Indies without any opposition. The Spanish Netherlands, so important both from their intrinsic riches, their situation as the certain theatre of war, and the numerous fortified towns with which they were studded, had been early secured for the young Bourbon prince by the Elector of Bavaria, who was at that time the governor of those valuable possessions. The distant colonies of the crown of Castile in America and the Indies, sent in their adhesion. Sardinia, Naples, Sicily, the Milanese, and the other Spanish possessions in Italy, speedily followed the example. The young Prince of Anjou made his formal entry into Spain in the beginning of 1701, and was crowned at Madrid under the title of Philip V. The principal continental powers, with the exception of the Emperor of Germany, acknowledged his title to the throne. Bavaria united itself in a cordial alliance with France and Spain. The Dutch were in despair; they beheld the power of Louis XIV. brought to their frontier. Flanders, instead of being the barrier of Europe against France, had become the outwork of France against Europe. Bavaria was an important advanced post, which gave the armies of Louis an entrance into the heart of Germany. Italy, France, Spain, Flanders, and part of Germany, were united in one close league, and in fact formed but one dominion. It was the empire of Charlemagne over again, directed with equal ability, founded on greater power, and backed by the boundless

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treasures of the Indies. Spain had threatened the liberties of Europe in the end of the sixteenth century: France had all but overthrown them in the close of the seventeenth. What hope was there of being able to make head against them both, united under such a monarch as Louis XIV.?

26. Comparative strength of the forces on the opposite sides.

Great as these dangers were, however, they had no effect in daunting the heroic spirit of William III. In concert with the Emperor and the United Provinces, who were too nearly threatened to be backward in falling into his views, he laboured for the formation of a great confederacy, which might prevent the union of the crowns of France and Castile in one family, and prevent, before it was too late, the consolidation of a power which threatened to be so formidable to the liberties of Europe. The death of that intrepid monarch in March 1702, which, had it taken place earlier, might have prevented the formation of the confederacy, proved no impediment, but rather the reverse. His measures had been so well taken, his resolute spirit had laboured with such effect, that the alliance, offensive and defensive, between the Emperor, England, and Holland, had been already signed. The accession of the Princess Anne, without weakening its bonds, added another power, of no mean importance, to its ranks. Her husband, Prince George of Denmark, brought the forces of that kingdom to aid the common cause. Prussia soon after followed the example. On the other hand, Bavaria, closely connected with the French and Spanish monarchies, both by the influence of its jealousy of Austria, and by the

government of the Netherlands, which its Elector held, adhered to France. Thus the forces of Europe were mutually arrayed and divided, much as they afterwards were in the coalition against Napoleon in 1813. It might already be foreseen, that Flanders, the Bavàrian plains, Spain, and Lombardy, would, as in the great contest which followed a century after, be the theatre of war. But the forces of France and Spain possessed this advantage, unknown in former wars, but immense in a military point of view, that they were in possession of the whole of the Netherlands, the numerous fortresses of which were alike valuable as a basis of offensive operations, and as affording asylums all but impregnable in cases of disaster. The Allied generals, whether they commenced their operations in Flanders or on the side of Germany, had to begin on the Rhine, and cut their way through the long barrier of fortresses with which the genius of Vauban had encircled the frontiers of the monarchy.

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTERS OF LOUIS XIV., WILLIAM III., AND JAMES II.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE WAR.—BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

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1. Strange diversity in the characters drawn by historians of Louis XIV.

LOUIS XIV., whose unmeasured ambition and diplomatic address had procured the splendid bequest of the Spanish succession for his family, was one of the most remarkable sovereigns who ever sat upon the throne of France. Yet there is none of whose character, even at this comparatively remote period, it is more difficult to form a just estimate. Beyond measure eulogised by the poets, orators, and annalists of his own age, who lived on his bounty, or were flattered by his address, he has been proportionally vilified by the historians, both foreign and national, of subsequent times. The Roman Catholic writers, with some truth, represent him as the champion of their faith, the sovereign who extirpated the demon of heresy in his dominions, and restored to the church in undivided unity the realm of France. The Protestant authors, with not less reason, regard him as the deadliest enemy of their religion, and the cruellest foe of those who had embraced it; as a faithless tyrant, who scru-

pled not, at the bidding of bigoted priests, to violate the national faith plighted by the Edict of Nantes, and to persecute, with unrelenting severity, the unhappy people who, from conscientious motives, had broken off from the Church of Rome. One set of writers paint him as a magnanimous monarch, whose mind, set on great things, and swayed by lofty desires, foreshadowed those vast designs which Napoleon, armed with the forces of the Revolution, afterwards for a brief space realised. Another set dwell on the foibles or the vices of his private character — depict him as alternately swayed by priests, or influenced by women; selfish in his desires, relentless in his hatred; and sacrificing the peace of Europe, and endangering the independence of France, for the gratification of personal vanity, or from the thirst of unbounded ambition.

2. Which arose from the greatness of his deeds.

It is the fate of all men who have made a great and durable impression on human affairs, and powerfully affected the interests, or thwarted the opinion of large bodies of men, to be represented in these opposite colours to future times. The party, whether in church or state, which they have elevated, the nation whose power or glory they have augmented, praise as much as those whom they have oppressed and injured, whether at home or abroad, strive to vilify their memory. But in the case of Louis XIV., this general propensity has been greatly increased by the opposite, and, at first sight, inconsistent features of his character. There is almost equal truth in the magniloquent eulogies of his admirers, and in the impassioned invectives of his

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enemies. He was not less great and magnanimous than he is represented by the elegant flattery of Racine or Boileau, nor less cruel and hard-hearted than he is painted by the austere justice of Sismondi or D'Aubigné.

3. Remarkable diversities and seeming contradictions of his character.

Like many other men, but more than most, he was made up of lofty and elevated, of selfish and frivolous qualities. He could alternately boast, with truth, that there was no longer any Pyrenees, and rival his youngest courtiers in frivolous and often heartless gallantry. In his younger years he was equally assiduous in his application to business, and engrossed with personal vanity. When he ascended the throne, his first words were,— "I intend that every paper, from a diplomatic despatch to a private petition, shall be submitted to me;" and his vast powers of application enabled him to compass the task. Like Louis Philippe, he was his own prime minister; and even when he acted through others, he never failed to communicate the impress of his own lofty mind and great capacity to the conduct of all his subordinate authorities. Discerning in the choice of his ministers, swayed only, at least in matters of state, by powerful intellects, patriotic and unselfish in the choice of his ministers, he collected round himself the first talent in France, and yet preserved his ascendency over them all. Yet at the same time, he deserted his queen for Madame la Vallière, and soon after broke La Vallière's heart, by abandoning her for Madame de Montespan. In mature life, his ambition to extend the bounds and enhance the glory of France, was equalled by his desire to win the admiration or gain the favour

of the fair sex. In his later days, he alternately engaged in devout austerities with Madame de Maintenon, and, with mournful resolution, asserted the independence of France against Europe in arms. Never was evinced a more striking exemplification of the saying, so well known among men of the world, that no one is a hero to his valet-de-chambre; nor a more remarkable confirmation of the truth, so often proclaimed by divines, that characters of imperfect goodness constitute the great majority of mankind.

4. Vast changes which he effected on France during his reign.

That he was a great man, as well as a successful sovereign, is decisively demonstrated by the mighty changes which he effected in his own realm, as well as in the neighbouring states of Europe. When he ascended the throne, France, though it contained the elements of greatness, had never yet become great. It had been alternately wasted by the ravages of the English, and torn by the fury of the religious wars. The insurrection of the Fronde had shortly before involved the capital in all the horrors of civil conflict;—barricades had been erected in the streets; alternate victory and defeat had by turns elevated and depressed the rival faction. Turenne and Condé had displayed their consummate talents in miniature warfare within sight of Notre-Dame. Never had the monarchy been depressed to a greater pitch of weakness than during the reign of Louis XIII. and the minority of Louis XIV. But from the time the latter sovereign ascended the throne, order seemed to arise out of chaos. The ascendency of a great mind made itself felt in every department. Civil

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war ceased; the rival faction disappeared; even the bitterness of religious hatred seemed for a time to be stilled by the influence of patriotic feeling. The energies of France, drawn forth during the agonies of civil conflict, were turned to public objects and the career of national aggrandisement—as those of England had been after the conclusion of the Great Rebellion, by the firm hand and magnanimous mind of Cromwell. From a pitiable state of anarchy, France at once appeared on the theatre of Europe, great, powerful, and united. It is no common capacity which can thus seize the helm and right the ship when it is reeling most violently, and the fury of contending elements has all but torn it in pieces. It is the highest proof of political capacity to discern the bent of the public mind, when most violently excited, and, by falling in with the prevailing desire of the majority, to convert the desolating vehemence of social conflict into the steady passion for national advancement. Napoleon did this with the political aspirations of the eighteenth, Louis XIV. with the religious fervour of the seventeenth century.

5. Which arose from his turn of mind coinciding with the spirit of the age.

It was because his character and turn of mind coincided with the national desires at the moment of his ascending the throne, that this great monarch was enabled to achieve this marvellous transformation. If Napoleon was the incarnation of the Revolution, with not less truth it may be said that Louis XIV. was the incarnation of the monarchy. The feudal spirit, modified but not destroyed by the changes of time, appeared to be concentrated, with its highest lustre, in his person.

He was still the head of the Franks—the lustre of the historic families yet surrounded his throne; but he was the head of the Franks only—that is, of a hundred thousand conquering warriors. Twenty millions of conquered Gauls were neither regarded nor considered in his administration, except in so far as they augmented the national strength, or added to the national resources. But this distinction was then neither perceived nor regarded. Worn out with civil dissension, torn to pieces by religious passions, the fervent minds and restless ambition of the French longed for a *national* field for exertion—an arena in which social dissensions might be forgotten. Louis XIV. gave them this field: he opened this arena.

6. His virtues and vices were alike those of his people.

He ascended the throne at the time when this desire had become so strong and general, as in a manner to concentrate on its objects the national will. His character, equally in all its parts, was adapted to the general want. He took the lead alike in the greatness and the foibles of his subjects. Were they ambitious? so was he:—were they desirous of renown? so was he:—were they set on national aggrandisement? so was he:—were they desirous of protection to industry? so was he:—were they prone to gallantry? so was he. His figure stately, and countenance majestic; his manner lofty and commanding; his conversation dignified, but enlightened; his spirit ardent, but patriotic—qualified him to take the lead and preserve his ascendency among a proud body of ancient nobles, whom the disasters of preceding reigns, and the astute policy of Cardinal

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Richelieu, had driven into the antechambers of Paris, but who preserved in their ideas and habits the pride and recollections of the conquerors who followed the banners of Clovis. And the great body of the people, proud of their sovereign, proud of his victories, proud of his magnificence, proud of his fame, proud of his national spirit, proud of the literary glory which environed his throne, in secret proud of his gallantries, joyfully followed their nobles in the brilliant career which his ambition opened, and submitted with as much docility to his government as they had once ranged themselves round the banners of their respective chiefs on the day of battle.

7. His government was essentially feudal and monarchical.

It was the peculiarity of the government of Louis XIV., arising from this fortuitous, but to him fortunate combination of circumstances, that it united the distinctions of rank, family attachments, and ancient ideas of feudal times, with the vigour and efficiency of monarchical government, and the lustre and brilliancy of literary glory. Such a combination could not, in the nature of things, last long; it must soon work out its own destruction. In truth, it was sensibly weakened during the course of the latter part of the half century that he sat upon the throne. But while it endured, it produced a most formidable union; it engendered an extraordinary and hitherto unprecedented phalanx of talent. The feudal ideas still lingering in the hearts of the nation, produced subordination; the national spirit, excited by the genius of the sovereign, induced unanimity; the development of talent, elicited by his discernment, conferred power; the literary celebrity, encouraged by

his munificence, diffused fame. The peculiar character of Louis, in which great talent was united with great pride, and unbounded ambition with heroic magnanimity, qualified him to turn to the best account this singular combination of circumstances, and to unite in France for a brief period, the lofty aspirations and dignified manners of chivalry, with the energy of rising talent and the lustre of literary renown.

8. Unity and centralisation were his great objects.

Louis XIV. was essentially monarchical. That was the secret of his success; it was because he first gave the powers of *unity* to the monarchy, that he rendered France so brilliant and powerful. All his changes, and they were many, from the dress of soldiers to the instructions to ambassadors, were characterised by the same spirit. He first introduced a *uniform* in the army. Before his time, the soldiers merely wore a banderole over their steel breast-plates and ordinary dresses. That was a great and symptomatic improvement; it at once induced an *esprit de corps* and a sense of responsibility. He first made the troops march with a measured step, and caused large bodies of men to move with the precision of a single company. The artillery and engineer service, under his auspices, made astonishing progress. His discerning eye selected the genius of Vauban, which invented, as it were, the modern system of fortification, and well-nigh brought it to its greatest elevation—and raised to the highest command that of Turenne, which carried the military art to the most consummate perfection. Skilfully turning the martial and enterprising genius of the Franks into the career of conquest, he

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multiplied tenfold their power, by conferring on them the inestimable advantages of skilled discipline and unity of action. He gathered the feudal array around his banner; he roused the ancient barons from their chateaux, the old retainers from their villages. But he arranged them in disciplined battalions of regular troops, who received the pay and obeyed the orders of government, and never left their banners. His regular army was all enrolled by voluntary enlistment and served for pay. The militia alone was raised by conscription. When he summoned the military forces of France to undertake the conquest of the Low Countries, he appeared at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men, all regular and disciplined troops, with a hundred pieces of cannon. Modern Europe had never seen such an array. It was irresistible, and speedily brought the monarch to the gates of Amsterdam.

9. His efforts to give unity to thought.

The same unity which the genius of Louis and his ministers communicated to the military power of France, he gave also to its naval forces and internal strength. To such a pitch of greatness did he raise the marine of the monarchy, that it all but outnumbered that of England: and the battle of La Hogue, in 1692, alone determined, as Trafalgar did a century after, to which of these rival powers the dominion of the seas was to belong. His Ordinances of the Marine, promulgated in 1781, form the best code of maritime law yet known, and one which is still referred to, like the Code Napoleon, as a ruling authority in all commercial states. He introduced astonishing reforms into the proceed-

ings of the courts of law, and to his efforts the great perfection of the French law, as it now appears in the admirable works of Pothier, is in a great degree to be ascribed. He reduced the government of the interior to that regular and methodical system of governors of provinces, mayors of cities, and other subordinate authorities, all receiving their instructions from the Tuileries, which, under no subsequent change of government, imperial or royal, has been abandoned, and which has, in every succeeding age, formed the main source of its strength. He concentrated around the monarchy the rays of genius from all parts of the country, and threw around its head a lustre of literary renown, which, more even than the exploits of his armies, dazzled and fascinated the minds of men. He arrayed the scholars, philosophers, and poets of his dominions like soldiers and sailors; almost all the academies of France, which have since become so famous, were of his institution; he sought to give discipline to thought, as he had done to his fleets and armies, and rewarded distinction in literary efforts, not less than warlike achievement. No monarch ever knew better the magical influence of intellectual strength on general opinion, or felt more strongly the expedience of enlisting it on the side of authority. Not less than Hildebrand or Napoleon, he aimed at drawing, not over his own country alone, but the whole of Europe, the meshes of regulated and centralised thought; and more durably than either he attained his object. The religious persecution, which constitutes the great blot on his reign, and caused its brilliant career to close in mourn-

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ing, was the result of the same desire. He longed to give the same unity to the church which he had done to the army, navy, and civil strength of the monarchy. He saw no reason why the Huguenots should not, at the royal command, face about like one of Turenne's battalions. Schism in the church was viewed by him in exactly the same light as rebellion in the state. No efforts were spared by inducements, good deeds, and fair promises, to make proselytes; but when twelve hundred thousand Protestants resisted his seductions, the sword, the fagot, and the wheel were resorted to without mercy for their destruction.

10. General resemblance of his ideas of government to those of Napoleon.

Napoleon, it is well known, had the highest admiration of Louis XIV. Nor is this surprising: their principles of government and leading objects of ambition were the same. "L'état—*c'est moi*," was the principle of this grandson of Henry IV.: "Your first duty is *to me*, your second to France," said the Emperor to his nephew Prince Louis Napoleon. In different words, the idea was the same. To concentrate Europe in France, France in Paris, Paris in the government, and the government in himself, was the ruling idea of each. But it was no concentration for selfish or unworthy purposes which was thus desired. It was for great and lofty objects that this undivided power was sought by both. It was neither to gratify the desire of an Eastern seraglio, nor exercise the tyranny of a Roman emperor, that either coveted unbounded authority. It was to exalt the nation of which they formed the head, to augment its power, extend its dominion, enhance its fame,

magnify its resources, that they both deemed themselves sent into the world. It was the general sense that this was the object of their administration which constituted the strength of both. Equally with the popular party in the present day, they regarded society as a pyramid, of which the multitude formed the base, and the monarch the head. Equally with the most ardent democrat, they desired the augmentation of the national resources, the increase of public felicity. But they both thought that these blessings must descend from the sovereign to his subject, not ascend from the subjects to their sovereign. "Every thing *for* the people, nothing *by* them," which Napoleon described as the secret of good government, was not less the maxim of the imperious despot of the Bourbon race.

11. Magnificent ideas of each as shown in their public works.

The identity of their ideas, the similarity of their objects of ambition, appears in the monuments which both have left at Paris. Great as was the desire of the Emperor to add to its embellishment, magnificent as were his ideas in the attempt, he has yet been unable to equal the noble structures of the Bourbon dynasty. The splendid pile of Versailles, the glittering dome of the Invalides, still, after the lapse of a century and a half, overshadow all the other monuments in the metropolis; though the confiscations of the Revolution, and the victories of the Emperor, gave succeeding governments the resources of the half of Europe for their construction. The inscription on the arch of Louis, "Ludovico Magno," still seems to embody the gratitude of the citizens to the greatest benefactor of the capital; and it is

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not generally known that the two edifices which have added most since his time to the embellishment of the metropolis, and of which the revolution and the empire would fain take the credit — the Pantheon and the Madeleine—were begun in 1764 by Louis XV., and owe their origin to the magnificent ideas which Louis XIV. transmitted to his, in other respects, unworthy descendant.*

12. Atrocity of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Had one dark and atrocious transaction not taken place, the annalist might have stopped here, and painted the French monarch, with a few foibles and weaknesses, the common bequest of mortality, yet still, upon the whole, a noble and magnanimous ruler. His ambition, great as it was, and desolating as it proved, both to the adjoining states, and in the end to his own subjects, was the "last infirmity of noble minds." He shared it with Cæsar and Alexander, with Charlemagne and Napoleon. Even his cruel and unnecessary ravaging of the Palatinate, though attended with dreadful private suffering, has too many parallels in the annals of military cruelty. His accession to the league of 1700 for the partition of Spain was a violent stretch of ambition, and carried into execution with equal duplicity and perfidy; but these were directed against the hereditary enemy of France, and the annals of diplomacy in all ages prove that violations of state morality are too frequent

* "La Madeleine comme le Pantheon avait été commencée la même année en 1764, par les ordres de Louis XV., le roi des grands monumens, et dont le regne a été travesti par la petite histoire."—CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis Philippe*, viii. 281.

among governments. His personal vanities and weaknesses, his love of show, his passion for women, his extravagant expenses, were common to him with his grandfather Henry IV.; they seemed inherent in the Bourbon race, and are the frailties to which heroic minds in every age have been most subject. But, for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the heart-rending cruelties with which it was carried into execution, no such apology can be found. It admits neither of palliation nor excuse. Were it not for the massacre of St Bartholomew, and the expulsion of the Morescoes from Spain, it would stand foremost in the annals of the world as an example of kingly perfidy and priestly cruelty.

13. Which produced the reaction against him that checked his power.

The expulsion of four hundred thousand innocent human beings from their country, for no other cause but difference of religious opinion—the destruction of nearly an hundred thousand, of whom it is said a tenth perished by the frightful tortures of the wheel and the stake—the wholesale desolation of provinces and destruction of cities for conscience sake, never will and never should be forgotten. It is the eternal disgrace of the Roman Catholic religion—a disgrace to which the "execrations of ages have not yet affixed an adequate censure"—that all these infamous state crimes took their origin in the bigoted zeal, or sanguinary ambition of the Church of Rome. Nor have any of them passed without their just reward. The expulsion of the Moors, the most industrious and valuable inhabitants of the Peninsula, has entailed a weakness upon the Spanish monarchy

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which the subsequent lapse of two centuries has been unable to repair. The reaction against the Romish atrocities produced the great league of which William III. was the head; it sharpened the swords of Eugene and Marlborough; it closed in mourning the reign of Louis XV. Nor did the national punishment stop here. The massacre of St Bartholomew, and revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were the chief among remote, but certain, causes of the French Revolution, and all the unutterable miseries which it brought both upon the Bourbon race and the professors of the Romish faith. Nations have no immortality; their punishment is inflicted in this world; it is visited with unerring certainty on the third and fourth generations. Providence has a certain way of dealing with the political sins of men—which is, to leave them to the consequences of their own actions.

14. Opposite characters of Louis XIV. and William III.

If ever the characters of two important actors on the theatre of human affairs stood forth in striking and emphatic contrast to each other, they were those of Louis XIV. and William III. They were, in truth, the representatives of the principles for which they respectively so long contended; their characters embodied the doctrines, and were distinguished by the features, of the causes for which they fought through life. As much as the turn of mind—stately, magnanimous, and ambitious, but bigoted and unscrupulous—of Louis XIV. personified the Romish, did the firm and simple, but persevering and unconquerable soul of William, embody the principles of the Protestant faith. The positions

they respectively held through life, the stations they occupied, the resources, moral and political, which they wielded, were not less characteristic of the causes of which they were severally the head. Louis led on the feudal energies of the French monarchy. Inured to rigid discipline, directed by consummate talent, supported by immense resources, his armies, uniting the courage of feudal to the organisation of civilised times, had at first, like those of Cæsar, only to appear to conquer. From his gorgeous palaces at Paris, he seemed able, like the Church of Rome from the halls of the Quirinal, to give law to the whole Christian world. William began the contest under very different circumstances. Sunk in obscure marshes, cooped up in a narrow territory, driven into a corner of Europe, the forces at his command appeared as nothing before the stupendous array of his adversary. He was the emblem of the Protestant faith, arising from small beginnings, springing from the energy of the middle classes, but destined to grow with ceaseless vigour, until it reached the gigantic strength of its awful antagonist.

15. Heroic resistance of William to the French invasion.

The result soon proved the prodigious difference in the early resources of the parties. Down went tower and town before the apparition of Louis in his strength. The iron barriers of Flanders yielded almost without a struggle to his arms. The genius of Turenne and Vauban, the presence of Louis, proved for the time irresistible. The Rhine was crossed; fifty thousand men appeared before the gates of Amsterdam. Dissension had paralysed its strength, terror all but mastered

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its resolution. England, influenced by French mistresses, bought by French gold, in secret won over to the French faith, held back, and ere long openly joined the oppressor, alike of its liberties and its religion. All seemed lost for the liberties of Europe and the Protestant faith. But William was not dismayed. He had a certain resource against subjugation left. In his own words, "he could die in the last ditch." He communicated his unconquerable spirit to his fainting fellow citizens; he inspired them with the noble resolution to abandon their country rather than submit to the invaders, and "seek in a new hemisphere that liberty of which Europe had become unworthy." The generous effort was not made in vain. The Dutch rallied round a leader who was not wanting to himself in such a crisis. The dikes were cut; the labour of centuries was lost; the ocean resumed its sway over the fields reft from its domain. But the cause of freedom, of religion, was gained. The French armies recoiled from the watery waste, as those of Napoleon afterwards did from the flames of Moscow. Amsterdam was the limit of the conquests of Louis XIV. He there found the power which said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The manifest danger to Europe caused the triple league to be formed; even Charles II. became alarmed at the fearful progress of his great rival. The German armies threatened the communications of the French in Holland with their own country. Louis XIV. was obliged to give orders to retreat; his conquests in the Low

Countries were lost as fast as they had been won. But the snake was scotched, not killed: its strength and daring were unabated. Long, and often doubtful, was the contest; it was bequeathed to a succeeding generation and another reign. But from the time of the invasion of Holland, the French arms and Romish domination permanently receded; and but for the desertion of the alliance by England, at the peace of Utrecht, the allies would have given law in the palace of the Grand Monarque, bridled the tyranny of Bossuet and Tellier, and permanently established the Protestant faith in nearly the half of Europe.

16. Adaptation of the character of William to his destiny in life.

Like many other men who are called on to play an important part in the affairs of the world, William seemed formed by nature for the duties he was destined to perform. Had his mind been stamped by a different die, his character cast in a different mould, he would have failed in his mission. He was not a monarch of the most brilliant, nor a general of the most daring kind. Had he been either the one or the other, he would have been shattered against the colossal strength of Louis XIV., and crushed in the very outset of his career. But he possessed in the highest perfection that great quality without which, in the hour of trial, all others prove of no avail—moral courage, and invincible determination. His enterprises, often designed with ability and executed with daring, were yet all based, like those of Wellington afterwards in Portugal, on a just sense of the necessity of husbanding his resources, arising from the constant inferiority of his forces and

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means to those of the enemy. He was perseverance itself. Nothing could shake his resolution, nothing divert his purpose. With equal energy he laboured in the cabinet to construct and keep together the vast alliance necessary to restrain the ambition of the French monarch, and toiled in the field to baffle the enterprises of his able generals.

17. His policy in war, which at length proved victorious.

With a force generally inferior in number, always less powerful than that of his adversaries in its discipline, composition, and resources, he nevertheless contrived to sustain the contest, and gradually wrested from his powerful enemy the more important fortresses, which, in the first tumult of invasion, had submitted to his arms. He was frequently worsted, but scarcely ever entirely defeated in pitched battles, for his troops were for the most part inferior in composition to those of the French, while his tenacity and skill never failed to interpose so as to avert a total disaster. But he generally contrived to inflict on them a loss equal to his own; and the barren honours of a well-contested field were all that remained to the victors. Like Washington, he made great use of the mattock and the spade, and often, though in the end victorious, the gallant chivalry of France were decimated before his well-constructed intrenchments. At length he worked his way up to a superiority, when the capture of Namur, in 1695, in the face of the French army, and the garrison commanded by Marshal Boufflers, proved that the armies of the Grand Monarque had by great exertions been overmatched. If the treaty of Nimeguen was less detrimental to the

French power than that of Utrecht afterwards proved, it was more glorious to the arms of the Dutch commonwealth and the guidance of William; for it was the result of efforts in which the weight of the conflict generally fell on Holland alone; and its honours were not to be shared with those won by the wisdom of a Marlborough, or the daring of a Eugene. And at length the treaty of Ryswick put a bridle in the mouth of Louis, and France openly receded before her once despised foe.

18. His character in private.

In private life, William was distinguished by the same qualities which marked his public career. He had not the chivalrous ardour which bespoke the nobles of France, nor the stately magnificence of their haughty sovereign. His manners and habits were such as arose from, and suited, the austere and laborious people amongst whom his life was passed. Without being insensible to the softer passions, he never permitted them to influence his conduct, or encroach upon his time. He was patient, laborious, and indefatigable. To courtiers accustomed to the polished elegance of Paris, or the profligate gallantry of St James's, his manners appeared cold and unbending. It was easy to see he had not been bred in the saloons of Versailles or the *soirées* of Charles II. But he was steady and unwavering in his resolutions; his desires were set on great objects; and his external demeanour was correct, and often dignified. He was reproached by the English, not without reason, with being unduly partial, after his accession to the British throne, to his Dutch subjects;

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and he was influenced through life by a love of money, which, though at first arising from a bitter sense of its necessity in his long and arduous conflicts, degenerated in his older years into an avaricious turn. The national debt of England has been improperly ascribed to his policy. It arose unavoidably from the Revolution, and is the price which every nation pays for a lasting change, how necessary soever, in its ruling dynasty. When the sovereign can no longer depend on the unbought loyalty of his subjects, he has no resource but in their interested attachment. The selfish desires of the holders of stock must come in place of the disinterested attachment of nations. Louis Philippe's government has done the same, under the influence of the same necessity. Yet William was not a perfect character. More than one dark transaction has left a stain on his memory; his accession to the treaties with France for the partition of Spain, proved that his ambition could at times render him insensible to all the dictates of public morality; and the massacre of Glencoe, if it did not equal the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the wide-spread misery with which it was attended, rivalled it in the perfidy in which it was conceived, and the cruelty with which it was executed.

19. Character of James II. of England.

Less distinguished than either of his great regal contemporaries, by genius or success, JAMES II. of England was yet a sovereign of no ordinary character, and the important events of his reign have impressed his name in an indelible manner on the records of history. In his person a dynasty was overturned, a form of

government changed, a race of sovereigns sent into exile, and a new impulse communicated to the reformed religion. He consummated the Waterloo of the royal dynasty of the Stuarts; he established, without intending it, the Protestant faith in the British empire on an imperishable foundation. Such deeds for good or for evil necessarily give immortality to their authors; for they lift them from the common herd of men, the effect of whose actions perish with themselves, to the rank of those who have made durable and indelible changes in human affairs. James did this, like Charles X. in after times, from the force of his will, and the absence of corresponding strength of understanding; from the sincerity of his conscientious opinions, and the want of that intermixture of worldly prudence which was necessary to give his measures lasting success. A less honest man would never have thought of hazarding the name of royalty for that of religion—a more able one would probably have succeeded in rendering his religion victorious. It is the mixture of zeal with rashness, sincerity with imprudence, courage with incapacity, which has generally induced royal martyrdom.

20. His good and heroic qualities.

Yet James II. was not destitute of abilities, and he was actuated by that sincerity of intention and earnestness of purpose, which is so important an element in every elevated character. He had none of the levity or *insouciance* of his brother Charles. That light-hearted monarch was his superior in penetration, and greatly his superior in prudence, but had less of the hero, and incomparably less of the martyr in his composition.

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Charles was at heart a Catholic, but he would never have sacrificed three crowns for a mass. In the arms of the Duchess of Portsmouth he forgot alike the cares and the duties of royalty. James was not without his personal frailties as well as Charles, but they did not form a ruling part of his character. Cast in a ruder mould, moved by more serious feelings, he was actuated in every period of life by lofty and respectable, because generous and disinterested, passions. Patriotism at first was his ruling motive—England had not a more gallant admiral; and in his combats with De Ruyter and Van Tromp, he exhibited a degree of nautical skill rarely witnessed in those who have been bred in palaces. Nelson or Collingwood did not more gallantly steer into the midst of the enemy's fleet, or engage with more dogged resolution, yard-arm to yard-arm, with a powerful and redoubtable foe. When he ascended the throne, this daring and obstinate disposition was entirely directed towards religion. A sincere, even a bigoted Catholic, he deemed his duty to his faith far superior to all worldly considerations. From the moment of his accession, he laboured assiduously to effect, if not the re-establishment of Romish supremacy, at least such an equal partition of power with the Church of England, as was probably, in the case of so ambitious a body as the Romish ecclesiastics, the same thing.

21. The rashness and imprudence which cost him his throne.

In the prosecution of this object, he was rash, vehement, and inconsiderate; deterred by no consideration of prudence, influenced by no calculation of his means to his end, he permitted, if he did not actually sanction,

atrocious cruelty and oppression towards his unhappy Protestant subjects; and drove on his own objects without the slightest regard to the means of effecting them which he possessed, or the chances of success which they presented. He uniformly maintained, to the last hour of his life, that it was perfect liberty of conscience, and not any exclusive supremacy, which he intended to establish for his Roman Catholic subjects; and several acts of his reign unquestionably favour this opinion. If so, it is a curious historical fact, illustrative of the silent changes of time on human affairs, that the Whigs of 1688 took the crown from his head, and placed a new dynasty on the throne, for attempting to do the very thing which their successors in 1829, after thirty years' incessant efforts, actually accomplished. As it was, the attempt lost James and his family the throne, threw England permanently into the Protestant alliance, and, by giving her the lead in the great confederacy against France, contributed more than any other cause to place her on that lofty eminence which she has ever since maintained in European affairs. The constancy of James in misfortune was as remarkable and more respectable than his vehemence in prosperity; with mournful resolution he continued to assert to his dying hour the cause of legitimacy against that of revolution; and died an exile in a foreign land, the martyr of religious fidelity and royal resolution.

22. Commencement of the war.

War having been resolved on, the first step was taken by the Emperor, who laid claim to Milan as a fief of the empire, and supported his pretensions by moving an army into Italy under the command of Prince Eugene

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of Savoy, who afterwards became so celebrated as the brother and worthy rival in arms of Marlborough. The French and Spaniards assembled an army in the Milanese to resist his advance; and the Duke of Mantua having joined the cause, that important city was garrisoned by the French troops. But Prince Eugene ere long obliged them to fall back from the banks of the Adige to the line of the Oglio, on which they made a stand. But though hostilities had thus commenced in Italy, negotiations were still carried on at the Hague. It was soon found, however, that the pretensions of the French king were of so exorbitant a character, that an accommodation was impossible. He had recently taken a step which showed how much his ambition had increased with the vast accession of power he had received. Charles II. had declared in his testament that the Duke of Anjou should renounce his rights to the crown of France before receiving that of Spain; but Louis would not permit him to make such a renunciation, and he accepted the Spanish crown without any qualification. The resolution to unite the two crowns on the same head was therefore not attempted to be disguised.

23. Forces on the side of France.

When the contest commenced, the forces which the contending parties could command, seemed nearly equal to each other, and the result showed that they were very equally matched. On the side of Louis was France, which, with a population of twenty millions, could maintain two hundred thousand soldiers in arms, and Spain, with its vast and varied possessions in the

Peninsula, Flanders, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia,* containing at least thirty millions of inhabitants, besides the colonies beyond seas, of great importance from the revenue, — not less than five millions sterling, — which they furnished to the Spanish government. Bavaria, too, was an important outwork, not merely from the courageous disposition of its inhabitants, and the firm adherence of its government, through jealousy of Austria, to the French interest, but from the entrance which it afforded to hostile armies into the heart of Germany. The central position, however, of France, and the close proximity of its frontiers to the seat of war in Flanders, Italy, and on the Rhine, rendered it easy to foresee, what the event soon demonstrated, that the weight of the contest, save in the Peninsula, would fall on its forces. But they were numerous and efficient, admirably disciplined, and led by generals of talent and experience; and above all, they were inspired with that confidence in themselves, and justifiable pride, which is the invariable consequence of a long train of military success.

24. Forces of the Allies.

On the other hand, the Allies had the troops of Austria, England, Holland, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and the lesser states of Germany, with slight succour from Prussia and Denmark. These powers had a numerical amount of inhabitants little inferior, if put together, to those of the French and Spanish monarchies, but they were incomparably more divided and distracted by separate interests and necessities, and the military re-

* Sismondi, xxvi. 286, 290. Capefigue, *Hist. de Louis XIV.* iv. 296, 320.

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sources of none of them, except Austria, had been fully drawn forth. The latter power had its forces, great as they were, divided by the pressure of an Hungarian insurrection, and the dangers of a Turkish invasion, which the activity of French diplomacy kept continually impending over it; and they were at such a distance from the scene of action, that they could seldom be relied on to appear in requisite time at the decisive point. The interests of the different powers were as various as their territories were far severed. England was sincerely set on preventing the union of the French and Spanish monarchies, because its independence was seriously threatened by their junction. But the other powers were actuated by very different motives. Austria was intent on regaining in whole the splendid inheritance of the Spanish monarchy, of which she regarded herself, not without reason, as defrauded by the testament of Charles II. Holland longed for a barrier of fortresses to shelter her from the invasion of France, which had at no distant period brought her to the very verge of destruction; while Prussia and Denmark were so far removed from the danger, that it was with difficulty they could be induced to make any considerable efforts in the common cause. England, albeit placed in the very front of the conflict, was so ignorant of her strength, and so little accustomed to exert it, that with a population, including Ireland, of little less than ten millions of souls, she had only forty thousand men under arms, while France, with her twenty millions, had two hundred thousand. Thus, though the physical resources on

the two sides were not materially different, yet the superiority in point of numerical amount of forces, central situation, and homogeneity of descent, was decisively on the side of France; and the danger was very great that the coalition would be dissolved by weighty strokes received by its exposed members, before the requisite succour could arrive from its distant and less menaced extremities.

25. Marlborough's first mission to the Continent and first campaign.

Marlborough's first mission to the Continent, after the accession of Anne, was of a diplomatic character; and it was by his unwearied efforts, suavity of manner, and singular talents for negotiation, that the difficulties which attend the formation of all such extensive confederacies were overcome. It was not, however, till war was declared, on 4th May, 1702, that he first became commander-in-chief of the Allied armies.

The first operation of the Allies was an attack on the small fort of Kaiserworth, on the right bank of the Rhine, belonging to the Elector of Cologne, which surrendered on the 15th May. The main French army, nominally under the direction of the Duke of Burgundy, really of Marshal Boufflers, entered the Duchy of Cleves in the end of the same month, and soon became engaged with the Allied forces, which at first, being inferior in numbers, fell back. Marlborough reached head-quarters when the French lay before Nimeguen; and the Dutch trembled for that frontier town. Reinforcements, however, rapidly came in from all quarters to join the Allied army; and Marlborough, finding himself at the head of a gallant force sixty thousand strong, resolved to com-

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mence offensive operations. His first operation was the siege of Venloo, which was carried by storm on the 18th September, after various actions in the course of the siege. "My Lord Cutts," says Marlborough, "commanded at one of the breaches; and the English grenadiers had the honour of being the first that entered the fort."* Ruremonde was next besieged; and the Allies, steadily advancing, opened the navigation of the Meuse as far as Maestricht. Stevenswart was taken on the 1st October; and, on the 6th, Ruremonde surrendered.

26. Storming of Liege and the Chartreuse, and conclusion of the campaign. 23d Sept.

Liege was the next object of attack; and the breaches of the citadel were, by the skilful operations of Cohorn, who commanded the allied engineers and artillery, declared practicable on the 23d of the same month. The assault was immediately ordered; and "by the extraordinary bravery," says Marlborough, "of the officers and soldiers, the citadel was carried by storm; and, for the honour of her Majesty's subjects, the English were the first that got upon the breach."† So early in this, as in every other war where ignorance and infatuation has not led them into the field, did the native-born valour of the Anglo-Saxon race make itself known! Seven battalions and a half were made prisoners on this occasion; and so disheartened was the enemy by the fall of the citadel, that the castle of the Chartreuse, with its garrison of fifteen hundred men, capitulated a few days afterwards. This last success gave the Allies the entire command of Liege, and concluded this short but

* *Despatches*, 21st September, 1702. † Ibid., 23d October, 1702.

glorious campaign, in the course of which they had made themselves masters, by main force, in the presence of the French army, of four fortified towns, conquered all Spanish Guelderland, opened the Meuse as far as Maestricht, carried the strong castles of Liege by storm, advanced their standards from the Rhine far into Flanders, and became enabled to take up their winter quarters in the enemy's territory, amidst fertile fields.

27. Narrow escape of Marlborough from being made prisoner.

The campaign being now concluded, and both parties having gone into winter quarters, Marlborough embarked on the Meuse to return to London, where his presence was much required to steady the authority and direct the cabinet of the Queen, who had so recently taken her seat on the throne. When dropping down the Meuse, in company of the Dutch commissioners, he was made prisoner by a French partisan, who had made an incursion into those parts; and owed his escape to the presence of mind of a servant named Gill, who, unperceived, put into his master's hands an old passport in the name of General Churchill. The Frenchman, intent only on plunder, seized all the plate and valuables in the boat, and made prisoners the small detachment of soldiers who accompanied them; but, ignorant of the inestimable prize within his grasp, allowed the remainder of the party, including Marlborough, to proceed on their way. On this occasion, it may truly be said, the boat carried Cæsar and his fortunes. He arrived in safety at the Hague, where the people, who regarded him as their guardian angel, and had heard of his narrow escape, received him with the most enthusi-

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astic acclamations. From thence, having concerted the plan for the ensuing campaign with the Dutch government, he crossed over to London, where his reception by the Queen and nation was of the most gratifying description. Her Majesty conferred on him the title of Duke of Marlborough and Marquis of Blandford, and sent a message to the House of Commons, suggesting a pension to him of £5000 a-year, secured on the revenue of the post-office; but that House refused to consent to the alienation of so considerable a part of the public revenue. He was amply compensated, however, for this disappointment, by the enthusiastic reception he met with from all classes of the nation, who, long unaccustomed to military success, at least in any cause in which they could sympathise, hailed with transports of joy this first revival of triumph in support of the Protestant faith, and over that power with which, for centuries, they had maintained so constant a rivalry.

28. Alliance with Sweden, and campaign of 1703. Capture of Bonn.

The campaign of 1703 was not fruitful of great events. Taught, by the untoward issue of the preceding one, the quality of the general and army with whom he had to contend, the French general cautiously remained on the defensive, and ably carried into execution the plan of the French King, which was to remain on the defensive in Flanders, and reserve the weight of his strokes for the valley of the Danube, where a great effort threatening Vienna was to be made. So skilfully were the measures of Marshal Boufflers taken, that all the efforts of Marlborough to force him to a general action proved abortive. The war in Flanders was thus limited to one

of posts and sieges; but in that the superiority of the Allied arms was successfully asserted, Parliament having been prevailed on to consent to an augmentation of the British contingent. But a treaty having been concluded with Sweden, and various reinforcements having been received from the lesser powers, preparations were made for the siege of Bonn, on the Rhine, a frontier town of Flanders, of great importance from its commanding the passage of that artery of Germany, and stopping, while in the enemy's hands, all transit of military stores or provisions for the use of the armies in Bavaria, or on the upper Rhine. The batteries opened with seventy heavy guns and English mortars on the 14th May 1703; a vigorous sortie with a thousand foot was repulsed, after having at first gained some success, on the following day, and on the 16th two breaches having been declared practicable, the garrison surrendered at discretion. After this success, the army moved against Huys, which was taken with its garrison of 900 men on the 23d August.

29. The Dutch prevent Marlborough from fighting, and the campaign concludes with the taking of Limbourg.

Marlborough and the English generals, after this success, were decidedly of opinion that it would be advisable at all hazard to attempt forcing the French lines, which were strongly fortified between Mehaigne and Leuwe, and a strong opinion to that effect was transmitted to the Hague on the very day after the fall of Huys.* They alleged with reason, that the Allies being superior in Flanders, and the French having the upper hand in Germany and Italy, it was of the utmost im-

* Memorial, 24th August 1703.—*Despatches*, i. 165.

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portance to follow up the present tide of success in the only quarter where it flowed in their favour, and counterbalance disasters elsewhere, by decisive events in the quarter where it was most material to obtain it. The Dutch government, however, set on getting a barrier for themselves, could not be brought to agree to this course, how great soever the advantages which it promised, and insisted instead, that Marlborough should undertake the siege of Limbourg, which lay open to attack. This was accordingly done; the trenches were commenced in the middle of September, and the garrison capitulated on the 27th of the same month: a poor compensation for the total defeat of the French army, which would in all probability have ensued if the bolder plan of operation he had so earnestly counselled had been adopted.* This terminated the campaign of 1703, which, though successful, had led to very different results from what might have been anticipated if Marlborough's advice had been followed, and an earlier victory of Ramillies laid open the whole Flemish plains. Having despatched eight battalions to reinforce the Prince of Hesse, who

* Marlborough was much chagrined at being interrupted in his meditated decisive operations by the States-General, on this occasion. On the 6th September, he wrote to them :—"Vos Hautes Puissances jugeront bien par le camp que nous venons de prendre, qu'on n'a pas voulu se résoudre à tenter les lignes. J'ai été convaincu de plus en plus, depuis l'honneur que j'ai eu de vous écrire, par les avis que j'ai reçu journellement de la situation des enemies, que cette entreprise n'était pas seulement practicable, mais même qu'on pourrait en espérer tout le succès que je m'étais proposé; enfin l'occasion en est perdue, et je souhaite de tout mon cœur qu'elle n'ait aucune fâcheuse suite, et qu'on n'ait pas lieu de s'en repentir quand il sera trop tard."—MARLBOROUGH *aux Etats Généraux*; 6 *Septembre* 1703. *Despatches*, i. 173.

had sustained serious disaster on the Moselle, he had an interview with the Archduke Charles, whom the Allies had acknowledged as King of Spain, and by whom he was presented with a magnificent sword set with diamonds; he next went to the Hague, and from thence proceeded to London to concert measures for the ensuing campaign, and stimulate the British government to the efforts necessary for its successful prosecution.

30. Disasters on the Upper Rhine and in Bavaria.

But while success had thus attended all the operations of the Allies in Flanders, where the English contingent acted, and Marlborough had the command, affairs had assumed a very different aspect in Germany and Italy, where the principal efforts of Louis had been made. The French were there superior alike in the number and quality of their troops, and, in Germany at least, in the skill with which they were commanded. Early in June, Marshal Tallard assumed the command of the French forces in Alsace, passed the Rhine at Strasburg on the 16th July, took Prissac on the 7th September, and invested Landau on the 16th October. The Allies, under the Prince of Hesse, attempted to raise the siege, but were defeated with considerable loss; and, soon after, Landau surrendered, thus terminating with disaster the campaign on the Upper Rhine. Still more considerable were the losses sustained in Bavaria. Marshal Villars commanded there, and, at the head of the French and Bavarians, defeated General Stirum, who headed the Imperialists, on the 20th September. In December, Marshal Marsin, who had succeeded Villars in the command, made himself master of the

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important city of Augsburg, and in January 1704 the Bavarians got possession of Passau. Meanwhile, a formidable insurrection had broken out in Hungary, which so distracted the cabinet of Vienna, that the capital seemed to be threatened by the combined forces of the French and Bavarians after the fall of Passau.

31. Extreme danger of the empire from these successes.

No event of importance took place in Italy during the campaign; Count Strahremberg, who commanded the Imperial forces, having with great ability forced the Duke de Vendôme, who was at the head of a superior body of French troops, to retire. But in Bavaria and and on the Danube, it was evident that the Allies were overmatched; and to the restoration of the balance in that quarter, the anxious attention of the confederates was turned during the winter of 1703-4. The dangerous state of the Emperor and the empire awakened the greatest solicitude at the Hague, as well as unbounded terror at Vienna, from whence the most urgent representations were made on the necessity of reinforcements being sent from Marlborough to their support. But though this was agreed to by England and Holland, so straitened were the Dutch finances, that they were wholly unable to form the necessary magazines to enable the Allies to commence operations. Marlborough, during the whole of January and February 1704, was indefatigable in his efforts to overcome these difficulties; and the preparations having at length been completed, it was agreed by the States, according to a plan of the campaign laid down by Marlborough, that he himself should proceed into Bavaria with the great body of the

Allied army in Flanders, leaving only a corps of observation in the Low Countries, to restrain any incursion which the French troops might attempt during his absence.

32. French plan of the campaign in Germany.

The plan of the campaign which promised these brilliant results to France, had been magnificently conceived by the cabinet of Versailles. The great genius of Louis XIV. in strategy there shone forth in full lustre. Instead of confining the war to one of posts and sieges in Flanders and Italy, it was resolved to throw the bulk of their forces at once into Bavaria, and operate against Austria from the heart of Germany, by pouring down the valley of the Danube. The advanced post held there by the Elector of Bavaria in front, forming a salient angle, penetrating as it were into the Imperial dominions, the menacing aspect of the Hungarian insurrection in rear, promised the most successful issue to this decisive operation. For this purpose Marshal Tallard, with the French army on the Upper Rhine, received orders to cross the Black Forest and advance into Swabia, and unite with the Elector of Bavaria, which he accordingly did at Donawerth, in the beginning of July. Marshal Villeroy, with forty battalions, and thirty-nine squadrons, was to break off from the army in Flanders and support the advance by a movement on the Moselle, so as to be in a condition to join the main army on the Danube, of which it would form, as it were, the left wing; while Vendôme, with the army of Italy, was to penetrate into the Tyrol, and advance by Innspruck on Salzburg. The united armies

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which it was calculated, after deducting all the losses of the campaign, would muster eighty thousand combatants, was then to move direct by Lintz and the valley of the Danube on Vienna, while a large detachment penetrated into Hungary to lend a hand to the already formidable insurrection in that kingdom. The plan was grandly conceived: it extended from Verona to Brussels, and brought the forces over that vast extent to converge to the decisive point in the valley of the Danube. The genius of Louis XIV. had outstripped the march of time; a war of sieges was to be turned into one of strategy, and 1704 promised the triumphs which were realised on the same ground, and by following the same plan, by Napoleon in 1805.*

33. Plan of the Allies to counteract it.

But if the plan of the campaign was ably conceived on the part of the French cabinet, it presented, from the multiplicity of its combinations, serious difficulties in execution, and it required, to ensure success, a larger force than was at their disposal. Attempted with inadequate forces, or unskilful generals, it presented the greatest danger to the invading party, and, like all other daring operations in war, staked the campaign on a single throw, in which decisive success or total ruin awaited the unlucky adventurer. Marlborough, by means of the secret information which he obtained from the French head-quarters, had got full intelligence of it, and its dangers to the Allies, if it succeeded, struck him as much as the chances of great advantage to them if

* CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.*, v. 208, 209.

ably thwarted. His line was instantly taken. He repaired forthwith to the Hague, where his great influence and engaging manners, joined to the evident peril of the empire, procured a ready acquiescence in all his proposals. It was agreed that the English General was to advance vigorously against Villeroy in the Low Countries, and force him either to accept battle, or retire to the Moselle or the Rhine. In either case, as success was not doubted, he was to cross over into Germany by the Electorate of Cologne, advance as rapidly as possible into Bavaria, and either form a junction with Prince Eugene, who commanded the imperial army in that quarter, or, by threatening the communications of the French army in Swabia, compel it to fall back to the Rhine. The great object was to save Vienna, and prevent the advance of the French into Hungary, where a few of their regiments might fan the sparks of insurrection into an inextinguishable flame. This plan, by weakening the Allies in the Low Countries, might expose them, and especially the Dutch, to disadvantage in that quarter, but that was of little consequence. The vital point was in the valley of the Danube: it was there that the decisive blows were to be struck. Marlborough, in resisting the French invasion, proceeded on exactly the same principles, and showed the same decision of mind as Napoleon in 1796, when he raised the siege of Mantua to meet the Austrian armies under Wurmser descending from the Tyrol; or Suwarroff in 1799, when he raised that of Turin to march against

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Macdonald advancing from Southern Italy towards the fatal field of the Trebbia.

34. Marlborough's cross march into Germany.

Marlborough began his march with the great body of his forces on the 8th May, and crossing the Meuse at Maestricht, proceeded with the utmost expedition towards the Rhine by Bedbourg and Kirpen, and arrived at Bonn on the 28th of the same month. Meanwhile, the French were also powerfully reinforcing their army on the Danube. Villeroy, with the French forces on the Meuse, retired before him towards the Moselle, and eluded all attempts to bring him to battle. Early in the same month strong reinforcements of French troops joined the Elector of Bavaria, while Villeroy with the army of Flanders was hastening in the same direction. Marlborough having obtained intelligence of these great additions to the enemy's forces in the vital quarter, wrote to the States-General, that unless they promptly sent him succour, the Emperor would be entirely ruined.* Meanwhile, however, relying chiefly on himself, he redoubled his activity and diligence. Continuing his march up the Rhine by Coblentz and Cassel, opposite Mayence, he crossed the Necker near Ladenbourg on the 3d June. Frome thence he pursued his march with-

* "Ce matin j'ai appris par une estafette que les ennemis avaient joint l'Electeur de Bavière avec 26,000 hommes, et que M. de Villeroi a passé la Meuse avec la meilleure partie de l'armée des Pays Bas, et qu'il poussait sa marche en toute diligence vers la Moselle, de sorte que, sans un prompt sécours, l'empire court risque d'être entièrement abimé."—MARLBOROUGH *aux Etats Généraux; Bonn*, 2 *Mai* 1704. *Despatches*, i. 274.

out intermission by Mundelshene, where he had, on the 10th June, his first interview with Prince Eugene, who had been called from Italy to command the Imperial forces, in the hope he might succeed in stemming the torrent of disaster in Germany. From thence he advanced by Great Heppach to Langenau, and first came in contact with the enemy on the 2d July, on the Schullenberg, near Donawert. Marlborough, at the head of the advanced guard of nine thousand men, there attacked the French and Bavarians, 12,000 strong, in their intrenched camp, which was extremely strong, and after a desperate resistance, aided by an opportune attack by the Prince of Baden, who commanded the Emperor's forces, carried the intrenchments, with the whole artillery which they mounted, and the loss of 7000 men and thirteen standards to the vanquished. He was inclined to venture upon this hazardous attempt by having received intelligence on the same day from Prince Eugene, that Marshal Tallard, at the head of fifty battalions and sixty squadrons of the best French troops, had arrived at Strasburg, and was using the utmost diligence to reach the Bavarian forces through the defiles of the Black Forest. But this advantage was not purchased without a severe loss; the Allies lost 1500 killed and 4000 wounded; and Marlborough himself, who headed the decisive attack, and was among the first to enter the trenches, was in the greatest danger.

35. Subsequent successes in Bavaria.

This brilliant opening of the German campaign was soon followed by substantial results. A few days after Rain surrendered; Aicha was carried by assault; and,

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following up his career of success, Marlborough advanced to within a league of Augsburg, under the cannon of which the Elector of Bavaria was placed with the remnant of his forces, in a situation too strong to admit of its being forced. He here made several attempts to detach the Elector, who was now reduced to the greatest straits, from the French alliance; but that prince, relying on the great army, forty-five thousand strong, which Marshal Tallard was bringing up to his support, from the Rhine, adhered with honourable fidelity to his engagements. Upon this Marlborough took post near Friburg, in such a situation as to cut him off from all communication with his dominions; and ravaged the country with his light troops, levying contributions wherever they went, and burning the villages with savage ferocity as far as the gates of Munich. Thus was avenged the barbarous desolation of the Palatinate, thirty years before, by the French army under the orders of Marshal Turenne. Overcome by the cries of his suffering subjects, the Elector at length consented to enter into a negociation, which made some progress; but the rapid approach of Marshal Tallard with the French army through the Black Forest, caused him to break it off, and hazard all on the fortune of war.

36. Marshal Tallard joins the Elector of Bavaria, who determines to fight.

Unable to induce the Elector, by the barbarities unhappily, at that time, too frequent on all sides in war, either to quit his intrenched camp under the cannon of Augsburg, or abandon the French alliance, the English general undertook the siege of Ingolstadt; he himself with the main body of the army covering the siege, and

Prince Louis of Baden conducting the operations in the trenches. Upon this, the Elector of Bavaria broke up from his strong position, and abandoning with heroic resolution his own country, marched to Biberach, where he effected his junction with Marshal Tallard, who now threatened Prince Eugene with an immediate attack. No sooner had he received intelligence of this, than Marlborough, on the 10th of August, sent the Duke of Wirtemburg with twenty-seven squadrons of horse to reinforce the prince; and early next morning detached General Churchill with twenty battalions across the Danube, to be in a situation to support him in case of need. He himself immediately after followed, and joined the Prince with his whole army on the 11th. Every thing now presaged decisive events. The Elector had boldly quitted Bavaria, leaving his whole dominions at the mercy of the enemy, except the fortified cities of Munich and Augsburg, and perilled his crown upon the issue of war at the French headquarters; while Marlborough and Eugene had united their forces, with a determination to give battle in the heart of Germany, in the enemy's territory, with their communications exposed to the utmost hazard, under circumstances where defeat could be attended with nothing short of total ruin.

37. Vendome is defeated in his attempt to penetrate through the Tyrol.

By the rapidity of his march, which had altogether outstripped the slower movements of Marshal Villeroy, who was still in the neighbourhood of the Moselle, Marlborough had defeated one important part of the combinations of the French king. But if Vendôme had

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succeeded in penetrating through the Tyrol, and joining the French and Bavarian armies to the north of the Alps, their united forces would have greatly preponderated over those of Marlborough and Eugene, and given them a decisive superiority for the whole remainder of the campaign. On this occasion, however, as subsequently in the wars of 1805 and 1809, the courage and loyalty of the Tyrolese proved the salvation of the Austrian monarchy. These sturdy mountaineers flew to arms; every defile was disputed; every castle required a separate siege. Accustomed to the use of arms from their earliest years, admirable marksmen, indefatigable in bearing fatigue, perfectly acquainted with the intricacies of their rugged country, they opposed so formidable a resistance to the advance of the French troops, that all the skill and perseverance of Vendôme were unable to overcome them. He got as far as Brixen, but could not succeed in forcing the passage above that town, or surmounting the crest of the Brenner. Thus Marshal Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria were left alone to make head against Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough.*

38. Forces on both sides, and their comparative merits.

In numerical amount, however, they were decidedly superior to the Allies. The French and Bavarian army consisted of sixty thousand men, of whom nearly forty-five thousand were French troops, the very best which the monarchy could produce, and they had sixty-one guns. Marlborough and Eugene had sixty-six battalions and one hundred and sixty squadrons, which,

* Capefigue, *Louis XIV.*, v. 211, 212.

with the artillery, might be about fifty-six thousand combatants, with fifty-one guns. The forces on the opposite sides were thus nearly equal in point of numerical amount; but there was a wide difference in their composition. Four-fifths of the French army were national troops, speaking the same language, animated by the same feelings, accustomed to the same discipline, and the most of whom had been accustomed to act together. The Allies, on the other hand, were a motley assemblage, like Hannibal's at Cannæ, or Wellington's at Waterloo, composed of the troops of many different nations, speaking different languages, trained to different discipline, but recently assembled together, and under the orders of a stranger general, one of those haughty islanders, little in general inured to war, but whose cold or supercilious manners had so often caused jealousies to arise in the best cemented confederacies. English, Prussians, Danes, Wirtemburgers, Dutch, Hanoverians, and Hessians, were blended in such nearly equal proportions, that the arms of no one state could be said by its numerical preponderance to be entitled to the precedence. But the consummate address, splendid talents, and conciliatory manners of Marlborough, as well as the brilliant valour which the English auxiliary force had displayed on many occasions, had won for them the lead, as they had formerly done when in no greater force among the confederates under Richard Cœur-de-Lion in the Holy War. It was universally felt that upon them, as on the Tenth Legion of

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Cæsar, or the Old Guard of Napoleon, the weight of the contest at the decisive moment would fall.

39. Division of the command between Marlborough and Eugene.

The army was divided into two *corps-d'armée;* the first commanded by the Duke in person, being by far the strongest, destined to bear the weight of the contest, and carry in front the enemy's position. These two corps, though co-operating, were at such a distance from each other, that they were much in the situation of the English and Prussians at Waterloo, or Napoleon and Ney's corps at Bautzen. The second, under Prince Eugene, which consisted chiefly of cavalry, was much weaker in point of numerical amount, and was intended for a subordinate attack, to distract the enemy's attention from the principal onset in front under Marlborough.* With ordinary officers, or even eminent generals of a second order, a dangerous rivalry for the supreme command would unquestionably have arisen, and

* The Allied and French armies stood thus:—

ALLIES.			
I. Right Wing, Eugene.	Batt.	Squad.	Men.
Prussians,	11	15	20,000
Danes,	7	0	
Austrians,	0	24	
Empire's,	0	35	
	18	74	
II. Centre and left, Marlborough.			
English,	14	14	36,000
Dutch,	14	22	
Hessians,	7	7	
Hanoverians,	13	25	
Danes,	0	22	
	48	86	
Total,	66	160	56,000
Guns,	52		

FRENCH.			
1. Left Wing, Marsin.	Batt.	Squad.	Men.
French,	29	50	18,000
Bavarians,	13	37	12,000
II. Right and centre, Tallard.			
French,	42	60	30,000
	84	147	60,000

KAUSLER, 107–108. MARL. *Disp.* i. 402.

added to the many seeds of division and causes of weakness which already existed in so multifarious an array. But these great men were superior to all such petty jealousies. Each, conscious of powers to do great things, and proud of fame already acquired, was willing to yield what was necessary for the common good to the other. They had no rivalry, save a noble emulation who should do most for the common cause in which they were jointly engaged. From the moment of their junction it was agreed that they should take the command of the whole army day about; and so perfectly did their views on all points coincide, and so entirely did their noble hearts beat in unison, that during eight subsequent campaigns that they for the most part acted together, there was never the slightest division between them, nor any interruption of the harmony with which the operations of the Allies were conducted.

40. French position and dispositions, with its dangers.

The French position was in places strong, and their disposition for resistance at each point where they were threatened by attack from the Allied forces, judicious; but there was a fatal defect in the general conception of their plan. Marshal Tallard was on the right, resting on the Danube, which secured him from being turned in that quarter, having the village of BLENHEIM in his front, which was strongly garrisoned by twenty-six battalions and twelve squadrons, all native French troops. In the centre was the village of Oberglau, which was occupied by fourteen battalions, among whom were three Irish corps of celebrated veterans. The communication

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between Blenheim and Oberglau was kept up by a screen consisting of eighty squadrons, in two lines, having two brigades of foot, consisting of seven battalions in its centre. The left, opposite Prince Eugene, was under the orders of Marshal Marsin, and consisted of twenty-two battalions of infantry and thirty-six squadrons, consisting for the most part of Bavarians and Marshal Marsin's men, posted in front of the village of Lutzingen. Thus the French consisted of sixty-nine battalions and a hundred and thirty-four squadrons, with ninety guns, and they mustered sixty thousand combatants, about five thousand more than the Allies, and with a great superiority of artillery. They were posted in a line strongly supported at each extremity, but weak in the centre, and with the wings, where the great body of the infantry was placed, at such a distance from each other, that if the centre was broken through, each ran the risk of being enveloped by the enemy, without the other being able to render any assistance. This danger as to the troops in Blenheim, the flower of their army, was much augmented by the circumstance, that if their centre was forced where it was formed of cavalry only, and the victors turned sharp round towards Blenheim, the horse would be driven headlong into the Danube, and the foot in that village would run the hazard of being surrounded or pushed into the river, which was not fordable, even for horse, in any part.

41. And advantages.

But though these circumstances would, to a far-seeing general, have presaged serious disaster in the event of defeat, yet the position was strong in itself, and the

French generals, long accustomed to victory, had some excuse for not having taken sufficiently into view the contingencies likely to occur in the event of defeat. Both the villages at the extremity of their line had been strengthened, not only with intrenchments hastily thrown up around them, thickly mounted with heavy cannon, but with barricades erected at all their principal entrances, formed of overturned carts, and all the furniture of the houses, which they had seized upon, as the insurgents did at Paris in 1830, for that purpose. The army stood upon a hill or gentle eminence, the guns from which commanded the whole plain by which alone it could be approached. This plain was low, and intersected on the right, in front of Blenheim, by a rivulet which flows down by a gentle descent to the Danube, and in front of Oberglau by another rivulet, which runs in two branches till within a few paces of the Danube, into which it also empties itself. These rivulets had bridges over them at the points where they flowed through villages; but they were difficult of passage at other points, for cavalry and artillery, and, with the ditches cut in the swampy meadows through which they flowed, proved no small impediment to the advance of the Allied army.

42. Disposition of the Allies for the attack.

The Duke of Marlborough, before the action began, visited in person each important battery, in order to ascertain the range of the guns. The troops under his command were drawn up in four lines; the infantry being in front, and the cavalry behind, in each line. This arrangement was adopted in order that the infan-

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try, who would get easiest through the streams, might form on the other side, and cover the formation of the horse, who might be more impeded. The fire of cannon soon became very animated on both sides, and the infantry advanced to the edge of the rivulets with that cheerful air and confident step which is so often the forerunner of success. On Prince Eugene's side, however, the impediments proved serious; the beds of the rivulets were so broad, that they required to be filled up with fascines before they could be passed by the guns; and when they did get across, though they replied, it was without much effect to the French cannon thundering from the heights, which commanded the whole field. At half-past twelve, nevertheless, these difficulties were, by great efforts on the part of Prince Eugene and his wing, overcome, and he sent word to Marlborough that he was ready. During this interval divine service had been performed at the head of every regiment and squadron in the Allied army; Marlborough himself had received the sacrament with great solemnity at midnight on the preceding day. He was seated on the ground, in the midst of his staff, eating a slender meal, when Eugene's aide-de-camp arrived. "Now, gentlemen, to your posts," said he, with the cheerful voice which betokened the confidence of victory, as he mounted his horse, and his aides-de-camp in every direction galloped off to warn the troops to be ready. Instantly the soldiers every where stood to their arms, and the signal was given to advance. The rivulets and marshy ground in front of Blenheim and Unterglau were passed by the first line

without much difficulty, though the men were exposed to a heavy fire of artillery from the French batteries; and the firm ground on the slope being reached, they advanced in the finest order to the attack—the cavalry in front having now defiled to a side, so as to let the English infantry take the lead.

43. Commencement of the battle.

The French did not expect, and were in a great measure unprepared for, an attack, when the heads of the Allied columns were seen advancing against them. Their generals had taken up the idea, that the enemy were about to retire to Nordlingen, and as the morning was hazy, the skirmishers of Eugene were close upon them before they were perceived.* Alarm guns were then immediately fired, officers galloped off in every direction, and Tallard and Marsin, hastily mounting their horses, did their utmost to put the troops in proper order. But no plan of defence had previously been arranged; and the troops were hastily thrown into the nearest villages, or such as seemed destined to be first the object of attack. Seven-and-twenty battalions in all were crowded into Blenheim, against which the English column of grenadiers was seen to be steadily advancing. Thirty battalions were posted in and around Oberglau; and Lutzingen was also strongly occupied, while eighteen French

13th Aug.

* Ce 13, au point du jour les ennemis ont battu la générale à 2 heures, à 3 l'assemblée. On les voit en bataille à la tête de leur camp, et suivant les apparences *ils marcheront* aujourd'hui. Le bruit du pays est qu'ils vont à Nordlingen. Si cela est, ils nous laisseront entre le Danube et eux, et par consequent ils auront de la peine à soutenir les établissemens qu'ils ont pris en Bavre.—Marshal Tallard au Roi de France, 13th August, 1704. *Campagnes de Tallard*, ii. 140.

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and Bavarian battalions were drawn up in an oblique line in the woods in its vicinity, on the extreme left of the cavalry. The guns were judiciously posted along the front of the line, in situations the best calculated to impede the enemy's advance. But there was the essential defect already noticed in the position, that its two keys, Blenheim and Oberglau, where the main body of the infantry was posted, were at such a distance from each other, that neither their defenders nor their cannon could render any mutual assistance; while the long intervening space was filled up by a line of horse, for the most part unsupported by foot soldiers, and incapable of resisting a vigorous attack from the united bodies of infantry and cavalry which were posted opposite them on the side of the enemy.*

44. Attack on Blenheim, which is repulsed.

Marlborough's eagle eye at once descried this glaring defect in the enemy's distribution of his forces, and he prepared to turn it to the best account. Lord Cutts commanded the division of British which advanced against Blenheim. General Rowe led the first line, supported by a brigade of Hessians. Rowe was within thirty yards of the palisades which the French had constructed at all the entrances of the village, when the enemy delivered their first fire. It was so close and well directed that a great number of officers and men fell; but their comrades, nothing daunted, held bravely on, and Rowe, moving straight forward, struck his sword on the palisades before he gave the word to fire. His order was

* Coxe, i. 396, 397. Capefigue, *Histoire de Louis XIV.* v. 216, 217.

to force an entrance with the bayonet, but the strength of the barriers and the vast numerical superiority of the enemy in the village rendered this impossible; and the assailants, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, remained striving against the palisades, endeavouring to break them down by sheer strength, until half their number were struck down. Rowe himself fell badly wounded at the foot of the pales, and his lieutenant-colonel and major were killed in endeavouring to carry him off. At this critical moment some squadrons of French gens-d'armes charged their flank, threw the assailants into confusion, and took the colours of Rowe's regiment, which, however, were immediately regained by the Hessians who advanced to its support. Lord Cutts, however, seeing fresh squadrons of cavalry preparing to charge, sent forward to Lumley, who commanded the nearest Allied horse, for a reinforcement of cavalry to cover his exposed flank, and five squadrons were immediately despatched across the Nebel to their support. They charged the enemy's horse gallantly, though double their force, and drove them headlong back; but fresh squadrons succeeded on the part of the French; a murderous fire in flank from the enclosures of Blenheim mowed down great numbers, and the whole recoiled in disorder to the Allied lines.*

45. Crossing of the Nebel by the Allies.

The English general, foreseeing that this success would be followed up by the enemy, and being satisfied that Blenheim was too strongly garrisoned to be carried by an assault of infantry unsupported by cavalry, resolved to bring his whole cavalry across the Nebel, and make

* HARE'S *Journal. Disp.* i. 402, 403. COXE, i. 400, 401.

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a general attack upon the weak part of the enemy's line between Blenheim and Oberglau. Midway between the two, on the centre of a bend of that stream towards the English position, was situated the village of Unterglau, which of course was first reached by the Allies. Marlborough sent forward Churchill with his division of infantry to attack that post; but before he reached it, the whole houses were in flames, having been set on fire by the French to retard the advance of the allies. The brave troops, however, rushed forward through the conflagration, and having gained the bridge, which was of stone, soon began to deploy on the other side. No sooner did he see this than Marlborough gave orders for the whole cavalry to advance. They descended rapidly and in good order to the edge of the stream; but the difficulties of the passage were there greater than had been expected, as they had to cross the rivulet where it was divided, and the meadow between the branches was wet and very soft, and the streams themselves deep and muddy. However, by casting in fascines and boards, the bottom was at length rendered comparatively hard, and by great exertions the horses struggled through, though exposed all the while to a galling fire from the heavy guns posted around Blenheim. They were still in disorder on the opposite bank, and with their ranks yet unformed, when they were suddenly charged by the whole front line of the French cavalry, which bore down upon them in compact order and with flying banners.*

* Coxe, i. 402, 403. Hare's *Journal. Marl. Disp.* 403, 404. Kausler, 110, 111.

46. The cavalry with great difficulty are got across.

Formidable as this attack was, it was rendered still more so by the heavy fire of cannon and musketry which at the same time issued from the enclosures of Blenheim, and threw the whole nearest flank of the Allied horse into confusion. The Danish and Hanoverian squadrons, however, were at length got across and brought up by Marlborough to the support of the English dragoons; and Churchill's men, intermingled with the horse near Oberglau, threw in their volleys with great effect upon the advancing cavalry of the enemy. It was only by their well-timed aid that a fatal rout was prevented before the horsemen could form on the opposite side. They could not, however, extend their succour far. Near Blenheim the dragoons were forced back in disorder to the very edge of the morass, by the charges of French cavalry, aided by the terrible fire from the batteries at that village; and it was only by great exertions, and constantly supporting the worsted squadrons by fresh troops as they were successively got across, that Marlborough succeeded in preventing an entire repulse in that quarter. But while the conflict was maintained with difficulty between Blenheim and Oberglau, a serious disaster had occurred on the British right, where Prince Holstein, with his Hanoverians, was directing the attack on Oberglau, and the presence of the Commander-in-Chief was loudly called for to prevent entire ruin in that quarter.*

Prince Holstein had no sooner crossed the stream, at

* *Marl. Disp.* i. 403, 404. COXE, i. 404, 405. CAPEFIGUE, v. 218.

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47. Rout of Prince Holstein in the attack on Oberglau.

the head of eleven battalions, and ere his men had time to form in good order on the opposite side, than he was charged with great vigour by the French infantry in Oberglau, nine thousand strong, including the Irish brigade, who debouched with loud shouts out of the village. This brave body of veterans, who had become admirable troops from the superinducing of French discipline and guidance on native Irish valour, charged with such vehemence, and threw in volleys so quick and well directed, that the Prince's men were utterly routed, he himself taken prisoner, and the centre of the Allies entirely broken through. There was not a moment to be lost, for the communication with Prince Eugene and the right wing of the army was on the point of being cut off. But Marlborough was at hand to repair the disaster; and he not only did so, but converted it into an advantage to his own side, which proved decisive. Galloping instantly to the spot, he led up in person some squadrons of British cavalry, closely followed by three battalions which had not been engaged. With the horse he charged the Irish, who, with the inconsiderate ardour of their nation, were pursuing their advantage in disorder, and quickly threw them into confusion. The infantry he posted so advantageously that their fire raked the column as it recoiled from the charge, and occasioned dreadful slaughter. The Irish were by this double attack driven back into Oberglau; while some squadrons of French horse, whom Marshal Marsin sent up to their relief, were repelled by the fire of a battery, which Marlborough brought

forward from Weilheim, and a powerful body of Imperial horse which he stationed on its flank. By this well-timed vigour, affairs were entirely re-established in the centre, and the communication with Prince Eugene was completely recovered.*

48. Operations of Eugene on the right.

Having achieved this great advantage, Marlborough returned to his cavalry between Oberglau and Blenheim, and found it all firmly established on solid ground on the other side of the Nebel. Meanwhile, Eugene had been actively engaged on the extreme right, where he too had crossed the Nebel in front of Lutzingen. His first attack with the Danes and Prussians carried a battery of six guns, and the Imperial horse broke the first line of French cavalry; but having advanced somewhat in disorder against the second line, they were not only repulsed, but driven back across the Nebel, and the guns were retaken. The victorious infantry were now isolated in the midst of enemies, and being charged vehemently on each flank, at the same time that a heavy fire in front shook their line, the Prussians and Danes were thrown into confusion, and with difficulty regained their original ground on the other side of the river. Nothing daunted by this reverse, Eugene rallied his cavalry, and led them again to the charge; but though at first successful, they were at length checked by the stout Bavarian horse, bravely headed by the Elector, and recoiled in disorder. A third time Eugene re-formed his horsemen, and led them to the attack,

* HARE'S *Journal. Marl. Disp.*, i. 404–406. COXE, i. 404, 405. KAUSLER, 110, 111.

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himself heading the charge. But this time the onset was feeble; the men were daunted by their double repulse; their line was speedily broken, and they again fled, completely routed, across the Nebel. In utter despair, Eugene left the Prince of Hanover and Duke of Wirtemberg to rally the horse, and himself galloped off to put himself at the head of the infantry, which had also advanced with the cavalry. That brave body of men, admirably disciplined, and encouraged by the presence of their general, stood their ground with heroic resolution. But they were charged with desperate hardihood by the enemy. Eugene himself was in the most imminent danger of being shot by a Bavarian dragoon, who was cut down while deliberately taking aim at him within a few paces. The admirable steadiness of the Prussians, who on this occasion gave tokens of what they were to become under the great Frederick, prevented a total defeat in this quarter. Immovable, they stood their ground amidst the thundering charges of horse, the front rank kneeling, and the rear maintaining a ceaseless rolling fire, till at length the enemy, wearied with fruitless efforts, drew off, leaving the ground covered with their wounded and dying.*

49. Grand and decisive charge by Marlborough in the centre.

Marlborough, however, had now gained firm footing both with his infantry and cavalry on the other side of the Nebel, and had made his dispositions for a general attack between Blenheim and Oberglau. The cavalry were drawn up in two lines directly in front of the

* MEM. DE TALLARD, ii. 234–241. COXE, i. 407, 408. HARE'S *Journal. Marl. Disp.* i. 406, 407.

enemy; the infantry immediately in their rear, chiefly to the left, to make head against the numerous battalions which occupied Blenheim. Tallard, seeing the weakness of his line from want of infantry, had drawn nine battalions from the reserve, and posted them near the centre, between Blenheim and Oberglau, behind the horse. Marlborough brought up three Hessian battalions to front them, and then, drawing his sword, ordered the trumpets to sound the advance, he himself leading them on. Indescribably grand was the spectacle which ensued. In compact order, and the finest array, the Allied cavalry, mustering eight thousand sabres, moved up the gentle slope in two lines—at first slowly, as on a field day, but gradually more quickly, as they drew nearer, and the fire of the artillery became more violent. The French horse, ten thousand strong, stood their ground firmly: the first and bravest of their chivalry were there: the banderoles of almost all the nobles in France floated over their squadrons. So hot was the fire of musketry and cannon when the assailants drew near, that their advance was checked: they retired sixty paces, and the battle was kept up for a few minutes only by a fire of artillery. Gradually, however, the fire of the enemy slackened; and Marlborough, taking advantage of the pause, led his cavalry again to the charge. With irresistible vehemence, the line dashed forward at full speed, and soon the crest of the ridge was passed. The French horsemen discharged their carbines at a considerable distance with little effect, and immediately wheeled about and fled. The battle

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was gained; the Allied horse rapidly inundated the open space between the two villages; the nine battalions in the middle were surrounded, cut to pieces, or taken. They made a noble resistance, and the men were found lying on their backs in their ranks as they had stood in the field.*

50 Eugene's success on the right.

The consequences of this great disaster on the right were speedily felt along the whole French line. Marsin's cavalry, now entirely uncovered on their flanks, rapidly fell back to avoid being turned, and rendered the position of the infantry in front of Eugene no longer tenable. That skilful general, perceiving the rout of the enemy on his left, and correctly judging that they could no longer maintain their ground, prepared his troops for a fourth charge, and soon issued forth at their head. The impulse of victory was now communicated to the whole line. After an arduous struggle in the plain, the enemy fell back at all points towards Oberglau and Lutzingen. Soon the flames, which burst forth from their buildings, announced that they were about to be evacuated. At this sight, loud cheers arose from the whole right, and the Danes and Prussians rushed forward with irresistible vigour against the burning villages. After an obstinate conflict, Lutzingen was carried, and the Bavarians were driven to a fresh position in rear, behind the streamlet of the same name. They still preserved their ranks, however, and faced about fiercely on their pursuers; but Marsin, having

* KAUSLER, 109, 111. COXE, i. 408, 409. HARE'S *Journal, Marl. Disp.* i. 406, 407.

lost the pivot of his left, and seeing his flank entirely uncovered by Marlborough's advance, and the centre driven back in disorder, gave orders for the general retreat of his wing.*

Meanwhile Tallard was bravely exerting himself, but in vain, to arrest the disorder in the right and centre. He drew up the remains of his cavalry in battle array, behind the tents of his camp, in a single line stretching towards Blenheim, in order, if possible, to extricate the infantry posted in that village, which were now well-nigh cut off. At the same time he sent pressing requests to Marsin for assistance. But ere succour could arrive, or time had even been gained for the delivery of his messages, the hand of fate was upon him. Marlborough, observing that the line was unsupported in rear, and uncovered on its right, gave orders for a general charge of all his cavalry. When the trumpet sounded, seven thousand horsemen, flushed with victory, bore down with irresistible force on the now dispirited and attenuated line of the enemy. The immense body of the French force broke without awaiting the shock, and the Allied cavalry rapidly piercing their centre, they were divided into two parts, one of which fled in wild disorder towards the Danube, and the other towards Sonderheim. Marlborough in person followed the first with fifty squadrons, while Hompesch with thirty pressed upon the second. Both pursuits proved entirely successful. Marlborough drove the broken mass before him headlong to the

51. Total rout of Tallard, who is made prisoner.

* KAUSLER, 113. COXE, i. 412. HARE'S *Journal. Disp.* i. 407, 408.

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Danube, where great numbers were drowned in attempting to cross, and the remainder were made prisoners on the brink. Marshal Tallard himself, with a small body of horse, which still kept their ranks, threw himself into the village of Sonderheim, on the margin of the river, but being speedily surrounded by the victorious squadrons of the enemy, he was obliged to surrender, and delivered his sword to the Prince of Hesse. Hompesch, at the same time, vigorously pressed on the broken fugitives who had fled towards Hochstedt, and on the way surrounded three battalions of infantry, who were striving to escape, and made them prisoners. Upon seeing this, the cavalry entirely broke their ranks, and fled as fast as their horses could carry them towards Morselingen, without attempting any further resistance.*

52. Mistake by which the French left escaped destruction.

When Tallard was taken, Marlborough immediately sent his own carriage to accommodate him, and despatched a pencil note, written on the parapet of a bridge, to the Duchess, to say the battle was gained.† But no sooner was this done, than he set himself to render his victory complete, by turning all the forces he could collect against the portions of the enemy's army which still

* KAUSLER, 112. COXE, i. 410, 411. *Mem. de Tallard*, ii. 248–252. *Marl. Disp.* i. 418.

† This note is still preserved at Blenheim: "I have not time to say more, but beg you will give my duty to the Queen, and let her know that her army has had a glorious victory. Monsieur Tallard and two other generals are in my coach; and I am following the rest. The bearer, my aide-de-camp, Col. Park, will give her an account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two, by another, and more at large,—MARLBOROUGH."—COXE, i. 413.

held their ground. He first directed his attention to the left wing of the enemy, which was falling back, closely followed by Eugene's horse, in the direction of Morselingen. Several squadrons were added to Hompesch's division; and the Duke was preparing to lead them on in person upon the flank of the column, which was defiling along the skirt of the wood. In the dusk of the evening, however, and with the view obscured by the volumes of smoke which were wafted from the field, the Bavarian and French troops were mistaken by Marlborough and his staff for Eugene's men in pursuit, and the charge, when on the point of being executed, was therefore countermanded. Thus the enemy on that side escaped without serious loss. This accidental mistake alone saved the French left from the utter ruin which had already overtaken the centre, and was soon to involve the right wing.*

53. Capture of all the troops in Blenheim, and conclusion of the battle.

Marlborough now turned all his forces against the troops in Blenheim, which, entirely cut off from the remainder of the army, and enveloped in darkness, were in a situation well-nigh desperate. To prevent the possibility of their escape, Webb, with the Queen's regiment, took possession of a barrier the enemy had constructed at one of the outlets of the village, to cover their retreat towards the eastward, and having posted his men across the street which led to the Danube, several hundred of the enemy, who were attempting to make their escape that way, were made prisoners. Prince George's regiment in like manner occupied the other

* KAUSLER, 113. COXE, i. 412, 413.

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issue towards the Danube, and all who came out that way were immediately captured. Others endeavoured to break out at other places, but Lord John Hay, at the head of his regiment of *Scots Greys*,* speedily met them at the top of a rising ground, and making them believe his troops were but the advanced guard of a larger force, stopped them on that side. When Churchill saw the defeat of the enemy's horse in the centre decided, he sent to request Lord Cutts to attack Blenheim in front, while he himself assailed it in flank. This was accordingly done: Orkney and General Ingolsby entering the village at the same time, in two different places, at the head of their respective regiments. But the French made so vigorous a resistance, especially at the churchyard, that they were forced to retire. Marlborough, however, now brought up his guns on all sides, and opened a fire on the village. Soon several houses took fire, and the flames casting a red light over the sky, enabled the gunners to direct their fire with unerring aim. M. Clerambault, their commander, had already fled, and the troops having lost all hope, and being entirely cut off, at length, after vainly endeavouring to obtain a capitulation, surrendered at discretion. With despair and indignation the soldiers submitted to their fate; the regiment of Navarre burnt their colours and

* This regiment might have *Blenheim* and *Waterloo*, the two greatest defeats France ever experienced in fair fight, on their colours, joined to Napoleon's words, "Ces terribles chevaux gris, comme ils travaillent." Few regiments in Europe would have so glorious an emblazonry.

buried their arms, that such trophies might not remain to grace the triumph of their enemies.*

54. Results of the battle.

In this battle Marlborough's wing lost 5000 men, and Eugene's 6000, in all 11,000. The French lost 13,000 prisoners, including 1200 officers, almost all taken by Marlborough's wing, besides 34 pieces of cannon, 25 standards, and 90 colours; Eugene took 13 pieces. The killed and wounded amounted to 14,000. But the total loss of the French and Bavarians, including those who deserted during their calamitous retreat through the Black Forest, was not less than 40,000 men,† a number greater than any which they sustained till the still more disastrous day of Waterloo. It is remarkable that by far the greatest defeats ever experienced by the French on land, Cressy, Azincour, Poitiers, Blenheim, Ramilies, Oudenarde, Salamanca, Vittoria, Waterloo, all came from the arms of England. At Leipsic they were not beaten in a fair field, but overthrown by an overwhelming superiority of force.

55. Causes of the defeat of the French.

It is quite evident to what cause the overwhelming magnitude of this defeat of the French army was owing. The strength of the position consisted solely in the rivulets and marshy grounds in its front, and when they were passed, the error of Marshal Tallard's disposition of

* HARE's *Journal. Marl. Disp.*, i. 408, 409. KAUSLER, 112. COXE, i. 415. CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.* v. 218, 219.

† CARDONNELL, *Disp. to Lord Harley*, 25th Sept. 1704, *Disp.* i. 410. By intercepted letters it appeared the enemy admitted a loss of 40,000 men before they reached the Rhine. MARLBOROUGH to the Duke of Shrewsbury, 28th Aug. 1704, *Disp.* i. 439.

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his troops was at once apparent. The infantry was accumulated in useless numbers in the villages. Of the twenty-seven battalions in Blenheim, twenty were of no service, and could not get into action, while the long line of cavalry from thence to Oberglau was sustained only by a few battalions of foot, incapable of making any effective resistance. This was the more inexcusable, as the French, having sixteen battalions of infantry more than the Allies, should at no point have shown themselves inferior in foot soldiers to their opponents. When the curtain of horse which stretched from Blenheim to Oberglau was broken through and driven off the field, the 13,000 infantry accumulated in the former of these villages could not escape falling into the enemy's hands; for they were pressed between Marlborough's victorious foot and horse on the one side, and the unfordable stream of the Danube on the other. But Marlborough, it is evident, evinced the capacity of a great general in the manner in which he surmounted these obstacles, and took advantage of these faulty dispositions; resolutely, in the first instance, overcoming the numerous impediments which opposed the passage of the rivulets, and then accumulating his horse and foot for a grand attack on the enemy's centre, which, besides destroying above half the troops assembled there, and driving thirty squadrons into the Danube, cut off and isolated the powerful body of infantry now ruinously crowded together in Blenheim, and compelled them to surrender.

Immense were the results of this transcendent victory.

56. Vast results of the victory.

The French army, lately so confident in its numbers and prowess, retreated, "or rather fled," as Marlborough says, through the Black Forest; abandoning the Elector of Bavaria and all the fortresses on the Danube to their fate. In the deepest dejection, and the utmost disorder, they reached the Rhine, scarce twelve thousand strong, on the 25th August, and immediately began defiling over by the bridge of Strasburg.* How different from the triumphant army, forty-five thousand strong, which with drums beating, and colours flying, had crossed at the same place six weeks before!. Marlborough, having detached part of his force to besiege Ulm, drew near with the bulk of his army to the Rhine, which

* The following letter, from an officer in the French army, paints the consternation which followed the battle of Blenheim :—

"Je vous dirai que Mercredi 13 Août il s'en donné la plus sanglante bataille qu'on ait vue de mémoire d'homme, et dans laquelle nous avons été entièrement defaits. M. de Tallard est bléssé, et fait prisonnier avec beaucoup d'autres généraux; MM. de Surlaube et Blainville morts; toute l'infanterie abimée ou faite prisonnière; M. de Tavanes, colonel, le Comte de Verne, général de la cavalerie, et le Marquis de Bellefonde tués sur le place. M. de Montperon, autre général de la cavalerie, blessé. Nous courons à perdre haleine depuis deux jours, et nous ne sommes arrivés a Ulm (rendezvous au débris de l'armée) que tout à l'heure, y ayant neuf bonnes heures dela au champ de bataille. Nous etions derriere l'infanterie, qui a eté *repoussée six fois*, et nous l'avions toujours soutenue: elle est entièrement defaite, tous les officiers tués ou blessés, hors M. de Precher, qui se porte aussi bien que moi, qui ai fait comme beaucoup d'autres, les généraux nous donnant l'example. Ce matin MM. de Courtebonne de Bourg, et D'Huricieres sont échappés, s'etant sauvés sur le chemin d'Ulm; enfin toute l'armée est dans une consternation terrible; nous avons perdus nos timbales et etendards."—*Lettre Originale dans* CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis XIV.* v. 321.

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he passed near Philipsburg on the 6th September, and soon after commenced the siege of Landau, on the French side; Prince Louis with 20,000 men forming the besieging force, and Eugene and Marlborough with 30,000 the covering army. Villeroi with the French army abandoned an intrenched camp which he had constructed to cover the town. Marlborough followed, and made every effort to bring the French marshal to battle, but in vain. He fell back first behind the Lauter, and then behind the Molfer, abandoning a rugged wooded country, one of the strongest in Europe, without firing a shot. The cannon of Blenheim still resounded in his ears. Ulm surrendered on the 16th September, with 250 pieces of cannon, and 1200 barrels of powder, which gave the Allies a solid foundation on the Danube, and effectually crushed the power of the Elector of Bavaria, who, isolated now in the midst of his enemies, had no alternative but to abandon his dominions, and seek refuge in Brussels, where he arrived in the end of September.

57. Capture of Landau and Traerbach, and conclusion of the campaign.

Meanwhile, as the siege of Landau was found to require more time than had been anticipated, owing to the extraordinary difficulties experienced in getting up supplies and forage for the troops, Marlborough repaired to Hanover and Berlin to stimulate the Prussian and Hanoverian cabinets to greater exertions in the common cause; and he succeeded in making arrangements for the addition of 8000 Prussian troops to their valuable auxiliary force, to be added to the army

of the Imperialists in Italy, which stood much in need of reinforcement. The Electress of Bavaria, who had been left Regent of that state in the absence of the Elector in Flanders, had now no resource left but submission; and a treaty was accordingly concluded in the beginning of November, by which she agreed to disband all her troops. Trêves and Traerbach were taken in the end of December; the Hungarian insurrection was suppressed; Landau capitulated in the beginning of the same month; a diversion which the enemy attempted towards Trêves was defeated by Marlborough's activity and vigilance, and that city put in a sufficient posture of defence; and the campaign being now finished, that accomplished commander returned to the Hague and London to receive the honour due for his past services, and urge their respective cabinets to the efforts necessary to turn them to good account.

58. Its marvellous results.

Thus by the operations of one single campaign was Bavaria crushed, Austria saved, and Germany delivered. Marlborough's cross-march from Flanders to the Danube, had extricated the Imperialists from a state of the utmost peril, and elevated them at once to security, victory, and conquest. The decisive blow struck at Blenheim, resounded through every part of Europe: it at once destroyed the vast fabric of power which it had taken Louis XIV., aided by the talents of Turenne, and the genius of Vauban, so long to construct. Instead of proudly descending the valley of the Danube, and threatening Vienna, as Napoleon afterwards did in 1805

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and 1809, the French were driven in the utmost disorder across the Rhine. The surrender of Traerbach and Landau gave the Allies a firm footing on the left bank of that river. The submission of Bavaria deprived the French of that great outwork, of which they have made such good use in their German wars; the Hungarian insurrection, disappointed of the expected aid from the armies on the Rhine, was pacified. Prussia was induced by this great triumph to co-operate in a more efficient manner in the common cause; the parsimony of the Dutch gave way before the joy of success; and the empire, delivered from invasion, was preparing to carry its victorious arms into the heart of France. Such achievements require no comment; they speak for themselves, and deservedly place Marlborough in the very highest rank of military commanders. The campaigns of Napoleon exhibit no more decisive or important results.

Honours and emoluments of every description were showered on the English hero for this glorious success. He was created a prince of the Holy Roman empire,*

* The holograph letter of the Emperor, announcing this honour, said, with equal truth and justice — "I am induced to assign to your highness a place among the princes of the empire, in order that it may universally appear how much I acknowledge myself and the empire to be indebted to the Queen of Great Britain, who sent her arms as far as Bavaria at a time when the affairs of the empire, by the defection of the Bavarians to the French, most needed that assistance and support: —And to your Grace, likewise, to whose prudence and courage, together with the bravery of the forces fighting under your command, the two victories lately granted by Providence to the Allies are

59. Honours and rewards bestowed on Marlborough.

and a tract of land in Germany, at Mindelsheim, erected into a principality in his favour. His humanity to the wounded, alike of the enemy's army and his own, and his courtesy to the vanquished, were the theme of universal admiration. The coolness with which he gave his orders in the hottest of the fire, and the admirable presence of mind with which he carried succour to every part of the field which required it, were admitted by all to have caused the triumph. His reception at the courts of Berlin and Hanover resembled that of a sovereign prince; the acclamations of the people, in all the towns through which he passed, rent the air; at the Hague his influence was such that he was regarded as the real Stadtholder. More substantial rewards awaited him in his own country. The munificence of the Queen and the gratitude of Parliament conferred upon him the extensive honour and manor of Woodstock, long a royal palace, and once the scene of the loves of Henry II. and the Fair Rosamond. By order of the Queen, not only was this noble estate settled on the duke and his heirs, but the royal comptroller commenced a magnificent palace for the duke on a scale worthy of his services and England's gratitude. From this origin the superb palace of Blenheim has taken its rise, which, although not built in the purest taste, or

principally attributed, not only by the voice of fame, but by the general officers in my army who had their share in your labour and your glory."—THE EMPEROR LEOPOLD, TO MARLBOROUGH, 28*th August*, 1704.—*Disp.* i. 538.

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after the most approved models, remains, and will long remain, a splendid monument of a nation's gratitude, and of the genius of Vanbrugh. But a yet more enduring monument was raised in the lines of the poet, which, even at this distance of time, are felt to be deserved: —

> "'Twas then great Marlborough's mighty soul was proved,
> That in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
> Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
> Examined all the dreadful scenes of war,
> In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
> To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid;
> Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
> And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
> So when an angel, by divine command
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land —
> Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past —
> Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
> And pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."
>
> ADDISON.

CHAPTER III.

CAMPAIGNS OF 1705 AND 1706.—BATTLE OF RAMILLIES AND CONQUEST OF FLANDERS.

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1. Backwardness of the English Parliament in voting supplies.

NOTWITHSTANDING the invaluable services thus rendered by Marlborough, both to the Emperor of Germany and the Queen of Great Britain, he was far from experiencing from either potentate that liberal support for the future prosecution of the war, which the inestimable opportunity now placed in their hands, and the formidable power still at the disposal of the enemy, so loudly required. As usual, the English Parliament were exceedingly backward in voting supplies either of men or money; nor was the cabinet of Vienna or that of the Hague inclined to be more liberal in their exertions. Though the House of Commons agreed to give £4,670,000 for the service of the ensuing year, yet the land forces voted were only 40,000 men. The population of Great Britain and Ireland could not be at that period under ten millions, while France, with about twenty millions, had above two hundred thousand under arms. It is this excessive and invariable reluctance of the English Parliament ever to make those

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efforts at the *commencement* of a war, which are necessary to turn to a good account the inherent bravery of its commanders, that is the cause of the long duration of our Continental contests, and of three-fourths of the national debt which now oppresses the empire, and, in its ultimate results, will endanger its existence. The national forces are, by the cry for economy and reduction which invariably is raised in peace, reduced to so low an ebb, that it is only by successive additions, made in many different years, that they can be raised up to any thing like the amount requisite for successful operations. In the meantime, and before the requisite additions can be made to the land and sea forces, disasters, sometimes serious and irreparable, are sustained on both elements. Thus disaster generally occurs in the commencement of every war; or if, by the genius of any extraordinary commander, as by that of Marlborough, unlooked-for success is achieved in the outset, the nation is unable to follow it up; the war languishes for want of the requisite support. The enemy gets time to recover from his consternation; his danger stimulates him to greater exertions; and many long years of warfare, deeply checkered with disaster, and attended with enormous expense, are required to obviate the effects of previous undue pacific reduction.

2. Bitter sense which Marlborough entertained of this parsimonious disposition

How bitterly Marlborough felt this want of support, on the part of the cabinets both of London and Vienna, which prevented him from following up the victory of Blenheim with the decisive operations against France which he would otherwise have undoubtedly commenced,

is proved by various parts of his correspondence. On the 16th of December 1704, he wrote to Mr Secretary Harley—"I am sorry to see nothing has been offered yet, *nor any care taken by Parliament for recruiting the army.* I mean chiefly the foot. It is of that consequence for an early campaign, that without it *we may run the hazard of losing, in a great measure, the fruits of the last;* and, therefore, I pray leave to recommend it to you to advise with your friends, if any proper method can be thought of, that may be laid before the House immediately, without waiting my arrival."* Nor was the cabinet of Vienna, notwithstanding the imminent danger they had recently run, more active in making the necessary efforts to repair the losses of the campaign—"You cannot," says Marlborough, "say more to us of the *supine negligence of the Court of Vienna,* with reference to your affairs, *than we are sensible of every where else;* and certainly if the Duke of Savoy's good conduct and bravery at Verue had not reduced the French to a very low ebb, the game must have been over before any help could come to you."† It is ever thus, especially with states such as Great Britain, in which the democratic element is so powerful as to imprint upon the measures of government that disregard of the future, and aversion to present efforts or burdens, which invariably characterises the mass of mankind. If Marlborough had been adequately supported and

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley,* 16th Dec. 1704.—*Disp.* i. 556.

† *Marlborough to Mr Hill* at Turin, 6th Feb. 1705.—*Disp.* i. 591.

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strengthened after the decisive blow struck at Blenheim; that is, if the governments of Vienna and London, with that of the Hague, had by a great and timely effort doubled his effective force when the French were broken and disheartened by defeat, he would have marched to Paris in the next campaign, and dictated peace to the *Grand Monarque* in his gorgeous halls of Versailles. It was short-sighted economy which entailed upon the Allied nations the costs and burdens of the next ten years of the War of the Succession, as it did the still greater costs and burdens of the Revolutionary contest, after the still more decisive successes of the Allies in the summer of 1793, when the iron frontier of the Netherlands had been entirely broken through, and their advanced posts, without any force to oppose them, were within a hundred and sixty miles of Paris.

3. Reasons for converting the war into one of sieges, and placing its seat in Flanders.

This parsimony of the Allied governments, and their invincible repugnance to the efforts and sacrifices which could alone bring, and certainly would have brought, the war to an early and glorious issue, is the cause of the subsequent conversion of the war into one of blockades and sieges, and of its being transferred to Flanders, where its progress was necessarily slow, and cost enormous, from the vast number of strongholds which required to be reduced at every stage of the Allied advance. It was said at the time, that in attacking Flanders in that quarter, Marlborough took the bull by the horns; that France on the side of the Rhine was far more vulnerable, and that the war was fixed in Flanders, for the purpose of augmenting the profits of the

generals employed, by protracting it. Subsequent writers, not reflecting on the difference of the circumstances, have observed the successful issue of the invasions of France from Switzerland and the Upper Rhine in 1814, and Flanders and the Lower Rhine in 1815, and concluded that a similar result would have attended a like bold invasion under Marlborough and Eugene. There never was a greater mistake. The great object of the war was to wrest Flanders from France. While the lilied standard floated on Brussels and Antwerp, the United Provinces were constantly in danger of being swallowed up; and there was no security for the independence of England, Holland, or any of the German States. If Marlborough and Eugene had had two hundred thousand effective men at their disposal, as Wellington and Blucher had in 1815, or three hundred thousand, as Schwartzenberg and Blucher had in 1814, they might doubtless have left half their force behind them to blockade the fortresses, and with the other half marched direct to Paris. But as they never had more than an hundred thousand on their muster-rolls, and could not at any time bring more than eighty thousand effective men into the field, this bold and decisive course was impossible. The French army in their front was rarely inferior to theirs, often superior; and how was it possible in these circumstances to venture on the perilous course of pushing on into the heart of the enemy's territory, leaving the frontier fortresses yet unsubdued in their rear?

The disastrous issue of the Blenheim campaign to the

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4. Examples of the same necessity being felt in subsequent times.

French, even when supported by the friendly arms and all the fortresses of Bavaria, in the preceding year, had shown what was the danger of such a course. The still more calamitous issue of the Moscow campaign to the army of Napoleon, demonstrated that even the greatest military talents, and most enormous accumulation of military force, affords no security against the incalculable danger of an undue advance beyond the base of military operations. The greatest generals of the last age, fruitful beyond all others in military talent, have acted on those principles, whenever they had not an overwhelming superiority of forces at their command. Wellington never invaded Spain till he was master of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajos; nor France till he had subdued San Sebastian and Pampeluna. The first use which Napoleon made of his victories at Montenotte and Dego was to compel the Court of Turin to surrender all their fortresses in Piedmont; of the victory of Marengo, to force the Imperialists to abandon the whole strongholds of Lombardy as far as the Adige. The possession of the single fortress of Mantua, in 1796, enabled the Austrians to arrest the course of Napoleon's victories, and gain time to assemble four different armies for the defence of the monarchy. The case of half a million of men, flushed by victory, and led by able and experienced leaders, assailing a single state, is the exception, not the rule.

Circumstances, therefore, of paramount importance and irresistible force, compelled Marlborough to fix the war in Flanders, and convert it into one of sieges and

5. Extraordinary talent of Marlborough for keeping together the alliance.

blockades. In entering upon such a system of hostility, sure, and comparatively free from risk, but slow and extremely costly, the alliance ran the greatest risk of being shipwrecked in consequence of the numerous discords, jealousies, and separate interests, which, in the case of almost every coalition recorded in history, have proved fatal to a great confederacy, if it does not obtain decisive success at the outset, before these seeds of division have had time to come to maturity. With what admirable skill and incomparable address Marlborough kept together the unwieldy alliance, will hereafter appear. Never was a man so qualified by nature for such a task. He was courtesy and grace personified. It was a common saying at the time, that neither man nor woman could resist him. "Of all the men I ever knew," says one who was himself a perfect master of the elegancies he so much admired, "the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them. Indeed he got the most by them; and, contrary to the custom of profound historians, who always assign deep causes for great events, I ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough's greatness to those graces. He had no brightness, nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly an excellent plain understanding, and sound judgment. But these qualities alone would probably have never raised him higher than they found him, which was page to James the Second's queen. But there the graces protected and promoted him. His figure was beautiful, but his manner was irresistible, either by man or woman. It was by this engaging,

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graceful manner, that he was enabled, during all the war, to connect the various and jarring powers of the Grand Alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies, and wrongheadedness. Whatever court he went to (and he was often obliged to go to restive and refractory ones) he brought them into his measures. The pensionary Heinsius, who had governed the United Provinces for forty years, was absolutely governed by him. He was always cool, and nobody ever observed the least variation in his countenance; he could refuse more gracefully than others could grant; and those who went from him the most dissatisfied as to the substance of their business, were yet charmed by his manner, and, as it were, comforted by it."*

6. Caution which the same cause imprinted on Marlborough's military conduct.

The same circumstance of necessity imprinted a peculiar character upon the generalship of Marlborough, as it has subsequently done on that of Wellington, and must ever do on the commander who is to head the forces of a great confederacy, especially if popular states enter into its composition. Caution and prudence, in such a situation, is not only important but indispensable. The jealousies of cabinets are such, their interests are in general so much at variance, that nothing can keep the alliance together for any length of time, but either an unbroken career of success, or the presence of some universally felt and overwhelming danger. Such is the impatience of disaster or taxation,

* *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, Lord Mahon's edition, i. 221–222.

and such the fickleness of disposition in the people of every country, that they can never be brought to carry on a contest for any considerable time, if danger is not evident from its cessation, or their imaginations are not excited by a constant series of triumphs. Both these difficulties existed in the case of Marlborough, for he was the general of a free state, which, unless in the excitement of victory, is constantly impatient of taxation, and the leader of the forces of an alliance which it required all his address and all the terrors of Louis XIV. to hinder every year from falling to pieces, from the jealousies and separate views of its members. With him, therefore, a prudent line of conduct was not only advisable but indispensable. A single defeat would overturn the ministry in England, and dissolve the alliance. Unbroken success was the condition on which alone the contest could be maintained; and the event proved that even this condition, which he constantly secured, could not in the end ensure its continuance. And from this very success arose a new set of dangers; for it took away the stimulus of fear, and brought into activity the usual selfishness of mankind, which leads every one to strive to throw the burden of efforts for the common cause on his neighbour.

7. Strange fetters which the alliance imposed on his conduct of the war.

A striking proof of the action of these principles of weakness, inherent in all confederacies, in the alliance of which he was the head, occurred in the very next campaign. It might have been expected, that after the march into Bavaria had demonstrated the military genius of the Duke of Marlborough, and the battle of

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Blenheim had in so decisive a manner broken the enemy's power, the principal direction of military affairs would have been intrusted to that consummate commander; and that the Allied cabinets, without presuming to interfere in the management of the campaigns, would have turned all their efforts to place at his disposal forces adequate to carry into execution the mighty designs which he meditated, and had shown himself so well qualified to carry into execution. It was quite the reverse. The Allied cabinets did nothing. They did worse than nothing—they interfered only to do mischief. Their principal object after this appeared to be to cramp the efforts of this great general, to overrule his bold designs, to tie down his aspiring genius. Each looked only to his own separate objects, and nothing could make them see that these were to be gained only by promoting the general objects of the alliance. Relieved from the danger of instant subjugation by the victory of Blenheim, and the retreat of the French army across the Rhine, the German powers relapsed into their usual state of supineness, lukewarmness, and indifference. No efforts of Marlborough could induce the Dutch either to enlarge their contingent, or even to render that already in the field fit for active service. The English force was not half of what the national strength was capable of sending forth. Parliament would not hear of any thing like an adequate expenditure. Thus the golden opportunity, never likely to be regained, of profiting by the consternation of the enemy after the battle of Blenheim, and their weakness after

forty thousand of their best troops had been lost to their armies, was allowed to pass away; and the war was permitted to dwindle into one of posts and sieges, when, by a vigorous effort, it might have been concluded in the next campaign.*

8. Vigorous efforts of the French Government.

It was not thus with the French. The same cause which had loosened the efforts of the confederates, had inspired unwonted vigour into their councils. The Rhine was crossed by the Allies; the French armies had been hurled with disgrace out of Germany; the territory of the Grand Monarque was threatened both from the side of Alsace and Flanders; and a formidable insurrection in the Cevennes distracted the force and threatened the peace of the kingdom. But against all these evils Louis made head. Never had the superior vigour and perseverance of a monarchy over those of a confederacy been more clearly evinced. Marshal Villars had been employed in the close of the preceding year, in appeasing the insurrection in the Cevennes, and his measures were at once so vigorous and conciliatory, that before the end of the following winter

* "C'est le retard de toutes les troupes Allemandes qui dérange nos affaires. Je ne saurais vous expliquer la situation où nous sommes qu'en vous envoyant les deux lettres ci jointes,—l'une que je viens de recevoir du Prince de Bade, et l'autre la réponse que je lui fais. En vérité notre état est plus à plaindre que vous ne croyez; mais je vous prie que cela n'aille pas outre. *Nous perdons la plus belle occasion du monde—manque des troupes qui devaiant être ici il y a deja longtemps.* Pour le reste de l'artillerie Hollandaise, et les provisions qui peuvent arriver de Mayence, vous les arrêterez, s'il vous plait, pour quelques jours, jusqu'à ce que je vous en écrive."—*Marlborough à M. Pesters; Treves*, 31 *Mai*, 1705. *Dispatches*, ii. 60–1.

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the disturbances were entirely at an end. In consequence of this, the forces employed in that quarter became disposable; and by this means, and the immense efforts made by the government over the whole kingdom, the armies on the frontier were so considerably augmented, that Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria took the field in the Low Countries at the head of seventy-five thousand men, while Marshal Marsin, on the Upper Rhine, covered Alsace with thirty thousand. Those armies were much larger than any which the Allies could bring against them; for although it had been calculated that Marlborough was to be at the head of ninety thousand men on the Moselle on the 1st May, yet, such had been the dilatory conduct of the States-general and the German princes, in the beginning of June there were scarcely thirty thousand men collected round his standards; and in Flanders and on the Upper Rhine the enemy's relative superiority was still greater.

9. Bold plan of Marlborough and Eugene for the invasion of France.

The plan of the campaign of 1705, based on the supposition that these great forces were to be at his disposal, concerted between him and Prince Eugene, was in the highest degree bold and decisive. It was fixed that, early in spring, ninety thousand men should be assembled in the country between the Moselle and the Saar, and, after establishing their magazines and base of operations at Treves and Traerbach, they should penetrate, in two columns, into Lorraine; that the column under Marlborough in person should advance along the course of the Moselle, and the other, under the

Margrave of Baden, by the valley of the Saar, and that Saar-Louis should be invested before the French army had time to take the field. In this way the whole fortresses of Flanders would be avoided, and the war, carried into the enemy's territory, would assail France on the side where her iron barrier was most easily pierced through. But the slowness of the Dutch, and backwardness of the Germans, rendered this well-conceived plan abortive, and doomed the English general, for the whole of a campaign which promised such important advantages, to little else but difficulty, delay, and vexation. Marlborough's enthusiasm, great as it was, nearly sank under the repeated disappointments which he experienced at this juncture; and, guarded as he was, his chagrin exhaled in several bitter complaints in his confidential correspondence.* But, like a true patriot and man of perseverance, he did not give way to despair when he

* Even so late as the 8th June, Marlborough wrote—"J'ai d'abord pris poste dans ce camp, où je me trouve à portée d'entreprendre la siège de Saar-Louis, si les troupes qui devaient avoir été ici il y a quelques jours m'avaient joint. Cependant je n'ai pas jusqu'ici un seul homme qui ne soit à la solde d'Angleterre ou de la Hollande. Les troupes de Bade ne peuvent arriver avant le 21 au plutôt; quelques-uns des Prussiens sont encore plus en arrière; et pour les trois mille chevaux que les princes voisins devaient nous fournir pour méner l'artillerie et les munitions, et sans quoi il nous sera impossible d'agir, je n'en ai aucune nouvelle, nonobstant toutes mes instances. J'ai grand peur même qu'il n'y ait, à l'heure même que je vous écris celle-ci, des regulations en chemin de la Haye qui détruiront entièrement tous nos projets de ce côté. Cette situation me donne tant d'inquiétude que je ne saurais me dispenser de vous prier d'en vouloir part à sa Majesté Impériale."—*Marlborough au Comte de Wroteslau, Elft*, 8 *Juin*, 1705. *Dispatches*, ii. 85.

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found nearly all that had been promised him awanting; but perceiving the greater designs impracticable, from the want of all the means by which they could be carried into execution, prepared to make the most of the insufficient force which alone was at his disposal.

10. Commencement of operations early in June on the Moselle.

At length, some of the German reinforcements having arrived, Marlborough, in the beginning of June, though still greatly inferior to the enemy, commenced operations. Such was the terror inspired by his name, and the tried valour of the English troops, that Villars remained on the defensive, and soon retreated. Without firing a shot, he evacuated a strong woody country which he occupied, and retired to a defensive position, extending from Haute Sirk on the right, to the Nevelle on the left, and communicating in the rear with Luxembourg, Thionville, and Saar-Louis. This position was so well chosen, that it was hopeless to attempt to force it without heavy cannon; and Marlborough's had not yet arrived, from the failure of the German princes to furnish the draught-horses they had promised. For nine weary days he remained in front of the French position, counting the hours till the guns and reinforcements came up; but such was the tardiness of the German powers, and the universal inefficiency of the inferior princes and potentates, that they never made their appearance. The English general was still anxiously awaiting the promised supplies, when intelligence arrived from the right of so alarming a character as at once changed the theatre of operations, and fixed him for the remainder of the campaign in the plains of Flanders.

It was the rapid progress which Marshal Villeroi and the Elector of Bavaria, at the head of seventy-five thousand men, were making in the heart of the Low Countries, which rendered this change necessary. General Overkirk was there intrusted with the army intended to cover Holland; but it was greatly inferior to the enemy in point of numerical amount, and still more so in the quality and composition of the troops of which it was made up. Aware of his superiority, and of the timid character of the government which was principally interested in that army, Villeroi pushed his advantages to the utmost. He advanced boldly upon the Meuse, carried by assault the fortress of Huys, and, marching upon Liege, occupied the town without much resistance, and laid siege to the citadel. Overkirk, cautiously remaining within his lines before Maestricht, was unable even to keep the field. The utmost alarm seized upon the United Provinces. They already in imagination saw Louis XIV. a second time at the gates of Amsterdam. Courier after courier was despatched to Marlborough soliciting relief in the most urgent terms; and it was hinted, that if effectual protection were not immediately given, Holland would be under the necessity of negotiating for a separate peace. There was not a moment to be lost: the Dutch were now as hard pressed as the Austrians had been in the preceding year, and in greater alarm than the Emperor was before the battle of Blenheim. A cross march like that into Bavaria could alone reinstate affairs. Without a moment's hesitation, Marlborough took his determination.

On the 17th June, without communicating his designs

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12. Sudden march of Marlborough to their relief.

to any one, or even without saying a word of the alarming intelligence he had received, he ordered the whole army to be under arms at midnight, and, setting out shortly after, he marched, without intermission, eighteen miles to the rear. Having thus gained a march upon the enemy, so as to avoid the risk of being pursued or harassed in his retreat, he left General D'Aubach with eleven battalions and twelve squadrons to cover the important magazines at Treves and Saarbruck; and himself, with the remainder of the army, about thirty thousand strong, marched rapidly in the direction of Maestricht. He was in hopes of being able, like the Consul Nero, in the memorable cross march from Apulia to the Metaurus, in Roman story, to surprise the French with his own army united to that of Overkirk, before they were aware of his approach; but in this he was disappointed. Villeroi got notice of his movement, and, instantly raising the siege of the citadel of Liege, withdrew, though still superior in number to the united forces of the enemy, within the shelter of the lines he had prepared and fortified with great care on the Meuse. Marlborough instantly attacked and carried Huys on the 11th July. But the satisfaction derived from having thus arrested the progress of the enemy in Flanders, and wrested from him the only conquest of the campaign, soon received a bitter alloy. Like Frederick in his marvellous campaigns, and Napoleon in his later years, the successes he gained in person were almost always overbalanced by the disasters sustained through the blunders or treachery of his lieutenants.

Hardly had Huys opened its gates, when advices

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13. The disasters of the German troops in the circle of Treves render the design abortive.

were received that D'Aubach, instead of obeying his orders, and defending the magazines at Treves and Saarbruck to the last extremity, had fled on the first appearance of a weak French detachment, and burned the whole stores which it had cost so much time and money to collect. This was a severe blow to Marlborough, for it at once rendered impracticable the offensive movement into Lorraine, on which his heart was so set, and from which he had anticipated such important results. It was no longer possible to carry the war into the enemy's territory, or turn, by an irruption into Lorraine, the whole fortresses of the enemy in Flanders. The tardiness of the German powers in the first instance, the terrors of the Dutch, and the misconduct of D'Aubach in the last, had caused that ably-conceived design entirely to miscarry. Great was the mortification of the English general at this signal disappointment of his most warmly-cherished hopes; it even went so far that he had thoughts of resigning his command.* But,

* "Par ces contretemps tous nos projets de ce côté-ci sont évanouis, au moins pour le present; et j'espère que V. A. me fera la justice de croire que j'ai fait tout ce qui a dependu de moi pour les faire réussir. Si je pouvais avoir l'honneur d'entretenir V. A. pour une seule heure, je lui dirai bien des choses, par où elle verrait combien je suis à plaindre. J'avais 94 escadrons et 72 bataillons, tous à le solde de l'Angleterre et de la Hollande; de sorte que, si l'on m'avait secondé, nous aurions eu une des plus glorieuses campagnes qu'on pouvait souhaiter. Après un tel traitment, V.A., je suis sûr, ne m'aurait pas blâmé si j'avais pris la résolution *de ne jamais plus servir*, comme je ne ferai pas aussi, je vous assure, après cette campagne, à moins que de pouvoir prendre des mésures avec l'empereur sur lesquelles je pourrais entièrement me fier."—*Marlborough à Eugene*, 21 *Juin*, 1705. *Dispatches*, ii. 124.

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instead of abandoning himself to despair, he set about, like the King of Prussia in after times, the preparation of a stroke which should reinstate his affairs by the terror with which it inspired the enemy, and the demonstration of inexhaustible resources it afforded in himself.

14. Position occupied by Villeroi.

The position taken up by the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Villeroi, when Marlborough's cross-march forced them to defensive measures, was so strong that it was regarded as impregnable; and in truth it was so to a front attack. With its right resting on Marche aux Dames on the Meuse, it stretched through Leau to the strong and important fortress of Antwerp. This line was long, and of course liable to be broken through at various points; but such was the skill with which every vulnerable part had been strengthened and fortified by the French engineers, that it was no easy matter to say where an impression could be made. Wherever a marsh or a stream intervened, the most skilful use had been made of it; while forts and redoubts, plentifully mounted with heavy cannon, both commanded all the approaches to the lines, and formed so many *points d'appui* to the defenders in case of disaster. Such a position, defended by seventy thousand men, directed by able generals, might well be deemed impregnable. But Marlborough, with an inferior force, resolved to attempt its conquest. He was at the head of 72 battalions and 94 squadrons, mustering 36,000 foot and 14,000 horse; and with them he determined to assail the enemy in their strong position. In doing so, however, he had difficul-

ties more formidable to overcome than even the resistance of the enemy in front; the timidity of the authorities at the Hague, and the nervousness under responsibility of the generals of the United Provinces, were more to be dreaded than Villeroi's redoubts. It required all the consummate address of the English general, aided by the able co-operation of General Overkirk, to obtain liberty from the Dutch authorities to engage in any offensive undertaking. At length, however, after infinite difficulty, a council of war, at headquarters, agreed to support any measure which might be deemed advisable; and Marlborough instantly set about putting his design in execution.

15. His able plan to overreach the enemy.

The better to conceal the real point of attack, he gave out that a march to the Moselle was to be immediately undertaken; and, to give a colour to the report, the corps which had been employed in the siege of Huys was not brought forward to the front. At the same time Overkirk was detached to the Allied left towards Bourdine, and Marlborough followed with a considerable force, ostensibly to support him. So completely was Villeroi imposed upon, that he drew large reinforcements from the centre to his extreme right; and soon forty thousand men were grouped round the sources of the Little Gheet on his extreme right. By this means the middle of his line was seriously weakened; and Marlborough instantly assembled, with every imaginable precaution to avoid discovery, all his disposable forces to attack the most vulnerable part of the lines. The corps hitherto stationed on the Meuse was

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silently brought up to the front; Marlborough put himself at the head of his own English and German troops, whom he had carried with him from the Moselle; and at eight at night, on the 17th July, the whole began to march, all profoundly ignorant of the service on which they were to be engaged. Each trooper was ordered to carry a truss of hay at his saddle-bow, as if a long march was in contemplation. At the same instant on which the columns under Marlborough's orders commenced their march, Overkirk repassed the Mehaigne on the left, and, concealed by darkness, fell into the general line of the advance of the Allied troops. No fascines or gabions had been brought along to fill up the ditch, for fear of exciting alarm in the lines. The trusses of hay alone were trusted to for that purpose, which would be equally effectual, and less likely to awaken suspicion.

16. Entire success of the attack on Villeroi's lines. July 17.

At four in the morning, the heads of the columns, wholly unperceived, were in front of the French works, and, covered by a thick fog, traversed the morass, passed the Gheet despite its steep banks, carried the castle of Wange, and, rushing forward with a swift pace, crossed the ditch on the trusses of hay, and, in three massy columns, scaled the rampart, and broke into the enemy's works. Hitherto entire success had attended this admirably planned attack; but the alarm was now given: a fresh corps of fifteen thousand men, under M. D' Allegré, hastily assembled, and a heavy fire was opened upon the Allies, now distinctly visible in the morning light, from a commanding battery. Upon this, Marlborough put himself at the head of Lumley's Eng-

lish horse, and, charging vigorously, succeeded, though not till he had sustained one repulse, in breaking through the line thus hastily formed. In this charge the Duke narrowly escaped with his life, in a personal conflict with a Bavarian officer. The Allies now crowded in in great numbers, and the French, panic-struck, fled on all sides, abandoning the whole centre of their intrenchments to the bold assailants. Villeroi, who had become aware, from the retreat of Overkirk in his front, that some attack was in contemplation, but was ignorant where the tempest was to fall, remained all night under arms. At length, attracted by the heavy fire, he approached the scene of action in the centre, only in time to see that the position was broken through, and the lines no longer tenable. He drew off his whole troops accordingly, and took up a new position, nearly at right angles to the former, stretching from Elixheim towards Tirlemont.

17. Obstinacy and backwardness of the Dutch prevents a complete victory.

It was part of the design of the Duke to have intercepted the line of retreat of the French, and prevented them from reaching the Dyle, to which they were tending; but such was the obstinacy and slowness of the Dutch generals, that nothing could persuade them to make any further exertion, and, in defiance of the orders and remonstrances alike of Marlborough and Overkirk, they pitched their tents, and refused to take any part in the pursuit. The consequence was, that Villeroi collected his scattered forces, crossed the Dyle in haste, and took up new ground, about eighteen miles in the rear, with his left sheltered by the cannon of Louvain.

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But, though the disobedience and obstinacy of the Dutch thus intercepted Marlborough in the career of victory, and rendered his success much less complete than it otherwise would have been, a mighty blow had yet been struck, reflecting the highest credit on the skill and resolution of the English general. The famous lines, on which the French had been labouring for months, had been broken through and carried, during a nocturnal conflict of a few hours; they had lost all their redoubts, and the cannon with which they were armed; M. D'Allegré, with twelve hundred prisoners, had been taken; and the army which lately besieged Liege and threatened Maestricht, was now driven back, defeated and discouraged, to seek refuge under the cannon of Louvain.

18. Dutch deputies continue their opposition.

Overkirk, who had so ably co-operated with Marlborough in this glorious victory, had the magnanimity as well as candour, in his despatch to the States-general, to ascribe the success which had been gained entirely to the skill and courage of the English general.* But the Dutch generals, who had interrupted his career of success, had the malignity to charge the consequences of their misconduct on his head, and even carried their effrontery so far as to accuse him of supineness in not following up his success, and cutting off the enemy's retreat to the Dyle, when it was themselves who had

* "It is a justice I owe to the Duke of Marlborough to state, that the honour of the enterprise, executed with so much skill and courage, is entirely due to him."—*Overkirk to States-general*, 19th July, 1705. COXE, ii. 151.

refused to obey his orders to do so. Rains of extraordinary severity fell from the 19th to the 23d July, which rendered all offensive operations impracticable, and gave Villeroi time, of which he ably availed himself, to strengthen his position behind the Dyle to such a degree, as to render it no longer assailable with any prospect of success. The precious moment, when the enemy might have been driven from it in the first tumult of success, had been lost.

19. Which mars all the subsequent operations of the campaign.

The subsequent success in the Flemish campaign by no means corresponded to its brilliant commencement. The jealousy of the Dutch ruined every thing. This gave rise to recriminations and jealousies, which rendered it impracticable even for the great abilities and consummate address of Marlborough to effect any thing of importance with the heterogeneous array, with the nominal command of which he was invested. The English general despatched his adjutant-general, Baron Hompesch, to represent to the States-general the impossibility of going on longer with such a divided responsibility; but, though they listened to his representations, nothing could induce them to put their troops under the direct orders of the commander-in chief. They still had "field deputies," as they were called, who were invested with the entire direction of the Dutch troops; and as they were civilians, wholly unacquainted with military affairs, they had recourse on every occasion to the very fractious generals who already had done so much mischief to the common cause. In vain Marlborough repeatedly endeavoured, as he himself said, "to

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cheat them into victory," by getting their consent to measures of which they did not see the bearing, calculated to achieve that object. Their timid, jealous spirit interposed on every occasion to mar important operations, and the corps they commanded was too considerable to admit of these operations being undertaken without their co-operation. After nine days' watching the enemy across the Dyle, Marlborough proposed to cross the river near Louvain, and attack the enemy; the Dutch deputies interposed their negative, to Marlborough's infinite mortification, as, in his own words, "it spoiled the whole campaign."*

20. The Dutch treacherously desert him.

Worn out with these long delays, Marlborough at length resolved at all hazards to pass the river, trusting that the Dutch, when they saw the conflict once seriously engaged, would not desert him. But in this he was mistaken. The deputies of the United Provinces not only failed to execute the part assigned them in the combined enterprise, but sent information of his

* "On Wednesday it was unanimously resolved we should pass the Dyle, but that afternoon there fell so much rain as rendered it impracticable; but the fair weather this morning made me determine to attempt it. Upon this the deputies held a council with all the generals of Overkirk's army, who have unanimously retracted their opinions, and declared the passage of the river too dangerous, which resolution, in my opinion, *will ruin the whole campaign.* They have, at the same time, proposed to me to attack the French on their left; but I know they will let that fall also, as soon as they see the ground. It is very mortifying to meet more obstruction from friends than from enemies; but that is now the case with me; yet I dare not show my resentment for fear of alarming the Dutch."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, 29th July, 1705. COXE, ii. 158.

designs to the enemy. The consequence was, Villeroi was on his guard. All the Duke's demonstrations could not draw his attention from his left, where the real attack was intended; but nevertheless he pushed on the English and Germans under his orders, who forced the passage in the most gallant style. But when the Duke ordered the Dutch generals to support the attack of the Duke of Wirtemberg, who had crossed the river, and established himself in force on the opposite bank, they refused to move their men. The consequence was that this attack, as well planned and likely to succeed as the famous forcing of the lines a fortnight before, proved abortive; and Marlborough, burning with indignation, was obliged to recall his troops when on the high road to victory, and when the river had been crossed without the loss of a hundred men. So general was the indignation at this shameful return on the part of the Dutch generals to Marlborough for all the services he had rendered to their country, that it drew forth the strongest expressions from one of his ablest, but most determined opponents, Lord Bolingbroke, who wrote to him at this juncture:—"It was very melancholy to find the malice of Slangenberg, the fears of Dopf, and the ignorance of the deputies, to mention no more, prevail so to disappoint your Grace, to their prejudice as well as ours. We hope the Dutch have agreed to what your Grace desires of them, without which the war becomes a jest to our enemies, *and can end in nothing but an ill peace, which is certain ruin to us.*"*

* *Bolingbroke to Marlborough*, August 18, 1705. COXE, ii. 160.

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21. Marlborough's operations on the field of Waterloo.

Still the English general was not discouraged. His public spirit and patriotism prevailed over his just private resentment. Finding it impossible to prevail on the Dutch deputies, who, in every sense, were so many viceroys over him, to agree to any attempt to force the passage of the Dyle, he resolved to turn it. For this purpose the army was put in motion on the 14th August; and, defiling to the left, he directed it in three columns towards the sources of the Dyle. The march was rapid, as the Duke had information that strong reinforcements, detached from the army at Alsace, would join Villeroi on the 18th. The troops soon came to ground subsequently immortalised in English story. On the 16th they reached Genappe, where, on 17th June 1815, the Life-guards under Lord Anglesea defeated the French lancers; on the day following, the enemy retired into the forest of Soignies, still covering Brussels, and the Allied head-quarters were moved to Braine la Leude. On the 17th August, a skirmish took place on the plain in front of WATERLOO; and the alarm being given, the Duke hastened to the spot, and rode over the field where Wellington and Napoleon contended a hundred and ten years afterwards. The French upon this retired into the forest of Soignies, and rested at Waterloo for the night.

14th August.

22. Immense advantage thus gained by Marlborough, who had turned the French.

The slightest glance at the map must be sufficient to show that, by this cross march to Genappe and Waterloo, Marlborough had gained an immense advantage over the enemy. *He had interposed between them and France.* He had relinquished for the time, it is true, his

own base of operations, and was out of communication with his magazines; but he had provided for this by taking six days' provisions for the army with him; and he could now force the French either to fight or to abandon Brussels, and retire towards Antwerp—the Allies being between them and France. Still clinging to their fortified lines on the Dyle, and desirous of covering Brussels, they had only occupied the wood of Soignies with their right wing; while the Allies occupied all the open country from Genappe to Frischermont and Braine la Leude, with their advanced posts pushed up to La Haye Sainte and Mont St Jean. The Allies now occupied the ground afterwards covered by Napoleon's army; the forest of Soignies and approaches to Brussels were guarded by the French. Incalculable were the results of a victory gained in such a position: it was by success gained over an army of half the size, that Napoleon established his power in so surprising a manner at Marengo. Impressed with such ideas, Marlborough, on the 18th August, anxiously reconnoitred the ground; and, finding the front practicable for the passage of troops, moved up his men in three columns to the attack. The artillery was sent to Wavre; the Allied columns traversed at right angles the line of march by which Blucher advanced to the support of Wellington on the 18th June, 1815.

23. Marlborough prepares to attack the French at Waterloo, 18th August.

Had Marlborough's orders been executed, it is probable he would have gained a victory which, from the relative position of the two armies, could not but have been decisive; and possibly the 18th August, 1705, might have become as celebrated in history as the 18th

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June, 1815. Overkirk, to whom he showed the ground at Over-Ische which he had destined for the scene of attack, perfectly concurred in the expedience of it, and orders were given to bring the artillery forward to commence a cannonade. By the malice or negligence of Slangenberg, who had again violated his express instructions, and permitted the baggage to intermingle with the artillery-train, the guns had not arrived, and some hours were lost before they could be pushed up. At length, but not till noon, the guns were brought forward, and the troops being in line, Marlborough rode along the front to give his last orders. The English and Germans were in the highest spirits, anticipating certain victory from the relative position of the armies; the French fighting with their faces to Paris, the Allies with theirs to Brussels.

24. But is again thwarted by the Dutch deputies.

But again the Dutch deputies and generals interposed, alleging that the enemy was too strongly posted to be attacked with any prospect of success. "Gentlemen," said Marlborough to the circle of generals which surrounded him, "I have reconnoitred the ground, and made dispositions for an attack. I am convinced that conscientiously, and as men of honour, we cannot now retire without an action. Should we neglect this opportunity, we must be responsible before God and man. You see the confusion which pervades the ranks of the enemy, and their embarrassment at our manœuvres. I leave you to judge whether we should attack to-day, or wait till to-morrow. It is indeed late; but you must consider that, by throwing up intrenchments during the night, the enemy will render their position far more

difficult to force." "Murder and massacre," replied Slangenberg. Marlborough, upon this, offered him two English for every Dutch battalion; but this too the Dutchman refused, on the plea that he did not understand English. Upon this the Duke offered to give him German regiments; but even this was declined, upon the pretence that the attack would be too hazardous. Marlborough, upon this, turned to the deputies and said, —"I disdain to send troops to dangers which I will not myself encounter. I will lead them where the peril is most imminent. I adjure you, gentlemen! for the love of God and your country, do not let us neglect so favourable an opportunity." But it was all in vain; and instead of acting, the Dutch deputies and generals spent three hours in debating, until night came on and it was too late to attempt any thing. Such was Marlborough's chagrin at this disappointment, that he said, on retiring from the field, "I am at this moment *ten years* older than I was four days ago.'

25. Marlborough is obliged to forego his advantages.

Next day, as Marlborough had foreseen, the enemy had strengthened their position with field-works; so that it was utterly hopeless to attempt getting the Dutch to agree to an attack which had now become hazardous, though it was not so the evening before. The case was now irremediable. The six days' bread which had been provided, was on the point of being exhausted, and a protracted campaign without communication with the magazines was impracticable. With a heavy heart, therefore, the English general re-measured his steps to the ground he had left in front of the Dyle, and gave

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orders for destroying the lines of Leau, which he had carried with so much ability. His vexation was increased afterwards, by finding that the consternation of the French had been such on the 18th August, when he was so urgent to attack them, that they intended only to have made a show of resistance, to gain time for their baggage and heavy guns being removed to Brussels. To all appearance Marlborough, if he had not been so shamefully thwarted, would have signalized the forest of Soignies by a victory as decisive as that of Blenheim, and realised the triumphant entrance into Brussels which Napoleon anticipated from his attack on Wellington on the same ground a hundred and ten years afterwards.

26. Complaints of the Dutch against Marlborough.

Nothing further, of any moment, was done in this campaign, except capturing Leau and levelling the enemy's lines on the Gheet. Marlborough wrote a formal letter to the States, in which he regretted the opportunity which had been lost, which General Overkirk had coincided with him in thinking promised a great and glorious victory; and he added, "My heart is so full that I cannot forbear representing to your High Mightinesses on this occasion, that I find my authority here to be much less than when I had the honour to command your troops in Germany."* The counter-memorial which the Dutch generals transmitted at the same time contains a curious picture of their idea of the subordination and direction of an army, and furnishes a key to the jealousy which had proved so fatal to the common cause.

* *Marlborough to the States*, Wavre, 19th August, 1705. *Disp.* ii. 224.

They complained that the Duke of Marlborough, "without holding a council of war, made two or three marches *for the execution of some design formed by his Grace;* and we cannot conceal from your High Mightinesses that all the generals of our army think it very strange *that they should not have the least notice of the said marches.*"* It has been already mentioned, that Marlborough, like every other good general, kept his designs to himself, from the impossibility of otherwise keeping them from the enemy; and that he had the additional motive for this reserve, in the case of the Dutch deputies and generals, of being desirous "to cheat them into victory."

27. Vexation and magnanimous conduct of Marlborough.

Chagrined by disappointment, and fully convinced, as Wellington was after his campaign with Cuesta and the Spaniards at Talavera, that it was in vain to attempt any thing further in the face of such impediments thrown in his way by the Allies, Marlborough retired, in the beginning of September, to Tirlemont, the mineral waters of which had been recommended to him; and, in the end of October, the troops on both sides went into winter quarters. His vexation at the conduct of the Dutch at this time was strongly expressed in private letters to his intimate friends;† but, though he exerted himself

* Dutch Generals' Mem. COXE, ii. 174.

† "Several prisoners whom we have taken, as well as the deserters, assure us, that they should have made no other defence but such as might have given them time to draw off their army to Brussels, where their baggage was already gone. By this you may imagine how I am vexed, seeing very plainly I am joined with people who will never do any thing."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, August 24, 1705.

"M. Overkirk et moi avons d'abord été reconnaitre les postes que nous voulions attaquer, et l'armée etant rangée en battaille sur le

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to the utmost during the suspension of operations in the field, both by memorials to his own government, and representations to the Dutch rulers, to get the direction of the army put upon a better footing, yet he had magnanimity and patriotism enough to sacrifice his private feelings to the public good. Instead of attempting, therefore, to inflame the resentment of the English cabinet at the conduct of the Dutch generals, he strove only to moderate it; and prevailed on them to suspend the sending of a formal remonstrance, which they had prepared, to the States-general, till the effect of his own private representations in that quarter was first ascertained. The result proved that he had judged wisely, and his disinterested conduct met with its deserved reward. The patriotic party, both in England and at the Hague, was strongly roused in his favour; the factious accusations of the English Tories, like those of the Whigs a century after against Wellington, were silenced; the States-general were compelled by the public indignation to withdraw from their commands the generals who had thwarted his measures;

midi, nous avions tout d'esperer, avec la benediction du ciel, vu notre supériorité, et la bonté des troupes, une heureuse journée; mais MM. les deputés de l'état ayant voulu consulter leurs généraux, et les trouvant de differentes sentiments d'avec M. Overkirk et moi, ils n'ont pas voulu passer outre. De sorte que tout notre dessein, après l'avoir méné jusque là, a échoué, et nous avons rebroussé chemin pour aller commencer la démolition des Lignes, et prendre Leau. Vous pouvez bien croire, Monsieur, que je suis au désespoir d'être obligé d'essuyer encore ce contretemps; mais je vois bien qu'il ne faut pas plus songer à agir offensivement avec ces messieurs, puisqu' ils ne veulent rien risquer quand même ils ont tout l'avantage de leur côté."—*Marlborough au Comte de Wartenberg, Wavre*, 20 *Août*, 1705. *Dispatches*, ii. 226.

and, without endangering the union of the two powers, the factious selfish men, who had perilled the object of their alliance, were for ever deprived of the means of doing mischief.

28. Jealousies of the Cabinet of Vienna and the German powers.

But while the danger was thus abated in one quarter, it only became more serious in another. The Dutch had been protected, and hindered from breaking off from the alliance, only by endangering the fidelity of the Austrians; and it had now become indispensable, at all hazards, to do something to appease their jealousies. The Imperial cabinet, in addition to the war in Italy, on the Upper Rhine, and in the Low Countries, had become involved in serious hostilities in Hungary; and they felt the difficulty, or rather impossibility, of maintaining the contest at once in so many different quarters. The cross march of Marlborough from the Moselle to Flanders, however loudly called for by the danger and necessities of the States, had been viewed with a jealous eye by the Emperor, as tending to lead the war away from the side of Lorraine, with which the German interests were wound up; and his demands were loud and frequent, now that the interests of the Dutch were sufficiently provided for, that the Duke should return with the English contingent to this, the proper theatre of offensive operations. But Marlborough's experience had taught him, that as little reliance was to be placed on the co-operation of the Margrave of Baden, and the lesser German powers, as on that of the Dutch; and he felt that it was altogether in vain to attempt another campaign, either in Germany or Flanders, unless some more effectual

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measures were taken to appease the jealousies, and secure the co-operation of this discordant alliance than had hitherto been adopted. With this view, after having arranged matters to his satisfaction at the Hague, and after Slangenberg had been removed from the command, he repaired to Vienna in November, and thence soon after to Berlin.

29. Extraordinary success of Marlborough in appeasing them at Vienna.

Marlborough's extraordinary address and powers of persuasion did not desert him on this critical occasion. Never was more strongly exemplified the truth of Chesterfield's remark, that manner had as much weight as matter in procuring him success; and that he was elevated to greatness as much on the wings of the Graces as by the strength of Minerva. Great as were the difficulties which attended the holding together the grand alliance, they all yielded to the magic of his name and the fascination of his manner. At Bernsberg he succeeded in obtaining from the Elector a promise for the increase of his contingent, and leave for sending it into Italy, where its co-operation was required; at Frankfort he overcame, by persuasion and address, the difficulties of the Margrave of Baden; and at Vienna he was magnificently received, and soon acquired unbounded credit with the Emperor. Besides being raised to the rank of a prince of the empire, with the most flattering assurances of esteem, he was fêted by the nobles, who vied with each other in demonstrations of respect to the illustrious conqueror of Blenheim. During his short sojourn of a fortnight there, he succeeded in allaying the suspicions and quieting the apprehensions of the Emperor, which

no other man could have done; and, having arranged the plan of the next campaign, and raised, on his own credit, a loan from the bankers, for the imperial court, of 100,000 crowns, as well as the promise of another of £250,000, which he afterwards obtained in London, he set out for Berlin, where his presence was not less necessary to stimulate the exertions and appease the complaints of the King of Prussia.

He arrived there on the 30th November, and on the same evening had an audience of the King, to whose strange and capricious temper he so completely accommodated himself, that he allayed all his discontents, and brought him over completely to his views. He prevailed on him to renew the treaty for the furnishing of eight thousand men to aid the common cause, and to repair the chasms in their ranks produced by the campaign, as well as to revoke the orders which had been issued for the return of the troops from Italy, where their removal would have proved of essential detriment. This concession, in the words of the prime minister who announced it, was granted "as a mark of respect to the Queen, and of particular friendship to the Duke." From Berlin he proceeded, loaded with honours and presents, to Hanover, where jealousies of a different kind, but not less dangerous, had arisen in consequence of the apprehensions there entertained, that the Whigs were endeavouring to thwart the eventual succession of the House of Hanover to the throne of England. Here also Marlborough's address succeeded in overcoming all difficulties; and after a sojourn of only a few days he departed in the highest

30. And at Berlin and Hanover.

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favour both with the Elector and his mother. From thence he hastened to the Hague, where he remained a fortnight, and succeeded in a great degree in removing those difficulties, and smoothing down those jealousies, which had proved so injurious to the common cause in the preceding campaign. He prevailed on the Dutch to reject the separate offers of accommodation, which had been made them by the French government. Having thus put all things on as favourable a footing as could be hoped for on the Continent, he embarked for England in the beginning of January, 1705, having overcome greater difficulties, and obtained greater advantages, in the course of this winter campaign, and with divided allies, than he ever did during a summer campaign with the enemy.

31. Similarity between his present situation and that of Wellington in his early campaigns.

Every one, however cursorily he may be acquainted with Wellington's campaigns, must be struck with the great similarity between the difficulties which thus beset the Duke of Marlborough, in the earlier periods of his career, and those which at a subsequent period so long hampered the genius and thwarted the efforts of England's greatest general. Slangenberg's jealousy was an exact counterpart of that of Cuesta at Talavera; the timidity of the Dutch authorities was precisely similar to that of the Portuguese regency; the difficulty of appeasing the jealousy of Austria and Prussia, identical with that which so often compelled Wellington to hurry from the field to Lisbon and Cadiz. Such is the selfishness of human nature that it seems impossible to get men, actuated by different interests, to concur in any

measures for the general good, but under the pressure of immediate danger, so threatening as to be obvious to every understanding, or by the influence of ability and address of the very highest order. It is this which in every age has caused the weakness of the best-cemented confederacies, and so often enabled single powers, not possessing a fourth part of their material resources, to triumph over them. And it is in the power of overcoming these difficulties and jealousies, that one of the most important qualities of the general of an alliance is to be found.

32. Universal backwardness of the Allies in the commencement of 1706.

Marlborough sailed for the Continent, to take the command of the armies in the Low Countries, on the 20th April, 1706. His design was to have transferred the seat of war into Italy, as affairs had become so unpromising in that quarter as to be well-nigh desperate. The Imperialists had been surprised by the French general, Vendôme, in their quarters near Como, and driven into the mountains behind that town with the loss of three thousand men; so that all hold of the plain of Lombardy was lost. The Duke of Savoy was even threatened with a siege in his capital of Turin. The Margrave of Baden was displaying his usual factious and impracticable disposition on the Upper Rhine: it seemed, in Marlborough's words, "as if he had no other object in view but to cover his own capital and residence." In Flanders, the habitual procrastination and tardiness of the Dutch had so thrown back the preparations, that it was impossible to begin the campaign so early as he had intended; and the jealousies

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of the cabinets of Berlin and Copenhagen had again revived to such a degree, that no aid was to be expected either from the Prussian or Danish contingents. It was chiefly to get beyond the reach of such troublesome and inconstant neighbours, that Marlborough was so desirous of transferring the seat of war to Italy. But all his efforts to induce the States-general to allow any part of their troops to be employed to the south of the Alps were unavailing; nor, indeed, could it reasonably have been expected that they would consent to hazard their forces in an expedition to so distant a quarter, not immediately connected with their interests. The resentment of the Elector of Hanover at the conduct of Queen Anne had become so excessive, that he positively refused to let his contingent march. The Danes and Hessians excused themselves on various pretences from moving their troops to the south; and the Emperor, instead of contributing any thing to the war in Flanders, was urgent that succour should be sent to him, and that the English general should in person take the command on the Moselle. Marlborough was thus reduced to the English troops, and those in the pay of Holland; but they amounted to nearly sixty thousand men; and, on the 19th May, he set out from the Hague to take the command of this force, which lay in front of the old French frontier on the river Dyle. Marshal Villeroi had there collected sixty-two thousand men; so that the two armies, in point of numerical strength, were very nearly equal.

The English general had established a secret correspondence with one Pasquini, an inhabitant of Namur,

33. Forces on the opposite sides in Flanders.

through whose agency, and that of some other citizens of the town who were inclined to the Imperial interest, he hoped to be able to make himself master of that important fortress. To facilitate that attempt, and have troops at hand ready to take advantage of any opening that might be afforded them in that quarter, he moved towards Tirlemont, directing his march by the sources of the Little Gheet. Determined to cover Namur, and knowing that the Hanoverians and Hessians were absent, Villeroi marched out of his lines, in order to stop the advance of the Allies, and gave battle in the open field. On the 20th May, the English and Dutch forces effected their junction at Bitsia; and on the day following the Danish contingent arrived, Marlborough having by great exertions persuaded them to come up from the Rhine, upon receiving a guarantee for their pay from the Dutch government. This raised his force to seventy-three battalions and one hundred and twenty-three squadrons. The French had seventy-four battalions and one hundred and twenty-eight squadrons. But they had a much greater advantage in the homogeneous quality of their troops, who were all of one country; while the forces of the confederates were drawn from three different nations, speaking different languages, and many of whom had never acted in the field together. Cadogan, with six hundred horse, formed the vanguard of Marlborough's army; and at daybreak on the 22d, he discovered the enemy's army grouped in dense masses in the strong camp of Mont St André. As their position stretched directly across

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the Allied line of march, a battle was unavoidable; and Marlborough was no sooner informed of it, than with a joyous heart he prepared for the conflict.*

34. Position of the French at Ramilies, 22d May.

The ground occupied by the enemy, and which has become so famous by the battle of RAMILIES which followed, was on the summit of an elevated plateau forming the highest ground in Brabant, immediately above the two sources of the Little Gheet. The elevated ground above is varied by gentle undulations, interspersed with garden grounds, and dotted with coppice woods. From it the two Gheets, the Mehaigne and the Dyle, take their rise, and flow in different directions, so that it is the highest surface in the whole country. The descents from the summit of the plateau to the Great Gheet are steep and abrupt; but the other rivers rise in marshes and mosses, which are very wet, and in some places impassable. Marlborough was well aware of the strength of the position on the summit of this eminence, and he had used all the despatch in his power to reach it before the enemy; but Villeroi had less ground to go over, and had his troops in battle-array on the summit before the English appeared in sight. The position occupied by the French ran along the front of a curve facing inwards, and overhanging the

* The composition and strength of the two armies was as follows:—

Allies.		Men.	French.		Men.
Battalions,	73	60,000	Battalions,	74	62,000
Squadrons,	123		Squadrons,	128	
Guns,	120		Guns,	130	

KAUSLER, 765.

sources of the Little Gheet. The troops were posted on the crest of the ridge above the marshes, having the village of Autre Eglise in front of the extreme left, and the villages of Offuz and Ramilies opposite their centre. The extreme right occupied the high grounds which overhang the Mehaigne, along the course of which, at a short distance, and nearly parallel to its banks, runs the old *chaussée*, which, after the lapse of more than a thousand years, still retains the name of Queen Brunehault. The right wing occupied the intermediate space and rested on the Mehaigne, and the village of Tavières on the banks of that river was garrisoned by a large body of foot soldiers. The infantry were drawn up in two lines, the villages in their front being strongly occupied by separate detachments of foot. In Ramilies alone twenty battalions were posted. The great bulk of the horse was also arranged in two lines on the right, across the chaussée of Brunehault, along which part of the Allied columns was expected to advance. On the highest point of the ridge thus occupied by the French, but immediately behind their extreme right and the mass of their cavalry, and in a position commanding the whole field of battle, the tomb or barrow of the ancient German hero Ottomond was situated. This position, it was evident, would become the subject of a desperate strife between the contending parties in the approaching conflict.*

Marlborough no sooner came in sight of the enemy's position than he formed his own plan of attack. His troops were divided into ten columns; the cavalry being

* KAUSLER, 765, 766. COXE, ii. 339, 340.

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35. Marlborough's manœuvres before the battle, and plan of attack.

in two lines on each wing, the infantry in six columns in the centre. He at once saw that the French right, surmounted by the lofty plateau on which the tomb of Ottomond was placed, was the key of their position, and against that he resolved to direct the weight of his onset; but, the better to conceal his real design, he determined to make a vehement false attack on the village of Autre Eglise and their left. The nature of the ground occupied by the Allies and the enemy respectively, favoured this design; for the French were posted round the circumference of a segment of a circle, while the Allies occupied the centre and chord, so that they could move with greater rapidity than their opponents from one part of the field to another. Marlborough's stratagem was entirely successful. He formed, in the first instance, with some ostentation, a weighty column of attack opposite to the French left, which menaced the village of Autre Eglise. No sooner did Villeroi perceive this than he drew a considerable body of infantry from his centre behind Offuz, and marched them with the utmost expedition to reinforce the threatened point on his left. When Marlborough saw this cross-movement fairly commenced, he skilfully availed himself of a rising ground on which the front of his column of attack on the right was placed, by directing the second line and the columns which supported it, just as the front had reached the edge of the plateau, where they obstructed the view of those behind them, to halt in a hollow, where they could not be seen, and immediately after, still concealed from the enemy's sight, to defile rapidly to the left till they came into the rear of the left centre. The Danish horse,

twenty squadrons strong, under the Duke of Wirtemberg, were at the same time placed in a third line, behind the cavalry of the left wing, so as to bring the weight of his horse as well as foot into that quarter.*

36. Commencement of the battle, and skilful feint of Marlborough.

At half-past twelve the cannonade began on both sides, and that of the French played heavily on the columns of the confederates advancing to the attack. The Allied right wing, directed against Autre Eglise, steadily advanced up the slopes from the banks of the Little Gheet to the edge of the plateau, where they halted, deployed into line, and opened their fire in such a position as to conceal entirely the transfer of the infantry and cavalry in their rear to the Allied left. No sooner had those columns in support reached it, than the attack began in real earnest, and with a preponderating force in that direction. Colonel Wertonville with four Dutch battalions advanced against Tavières, while twelve battalions in columns of companies, supported by a strong reserve, began the attack on Ramilies in the left centre. The vehemence of this assault soon convinced Villeroi that the real attack of the Allies was in that quarter; but he had no reserve of foot to support the troops in the villages, every disposable man having been sent off to the left in the direction of Autre Eglise. In this dilemma he hastily ordered fourteen squadrons of horse to dismount, and, supported by two Swiss battalions, moved them up to the support of the troops in Tavières. Before they could arrive, however, the Dutch battalions had with great gallantry carried that

* Coxe, ii. 342–344, 345. Kausler, 766.

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village; and Marlborough, directing the Danish horse, under the brave Duke of Wirtemberg, against the flank of the dismounted dragoons, as they were in column and marching up, the Swiss were speedily cut to pieces, and hurled back in confusion on the French horse, who were advancing to their support.*

37. Repulse of Overkirk, and imminent danger of Marlborough, when listening to his relief.

Following up his success, Overkirk next charged the first line of advancing French cavalry with the first line of the Allied horse, and such was the vigour of his onset, that the enemy were broken and thrown back. But the second line of French and Bavarian horse soon came up, and assailing Overkirk's men when they were disordered by success, and little expecting another struggle, overthrew them without difficulty, drove them back in great confusion, and almost entirely restored the battle in that quarter. The chances were that the victorious French horse, having cleared the open ground of their opponents, would wheel about and attack in rear the twelve battalions who were warmly engaged with the attack on Ramilies. Marlborough instantly saw the danger, and, putting himself at the head of seventeen squadrons at hand, led them on himself to arrest the progress of the victorious horse; while, at the same time, he sent orders for every disposable sabre to come up from his right with the utmost expedition. Twenty squadrons were there in reserve; they instantly wheeled threes about, and galloped off to the support of their leader. The moment was critical, and nothing but the admirable intrepidity and presence of mind of the

* KAUSLER, 346. COXE, ii. 345–347.

English general could have retrieved the Allied affairs. As he was leading on this reserve with his wonted gallantry, and under a dreadful fire from the French batteries on the heights behind Ramilies, he was recognised by some French troopers, with whom he had formerly served in the time of Charles II., who made a sudden rush at him. They had well-nigh made him prisoner, for they succeeded in surrounding him before his men could come up to the rescue; but he extricated himself from the throng of assailants by fighting his way out, like the knights of old, sword in hand. He next tried to leap a ditch, but his horse fell in the attempt; and, when mounting another horse given him by his aide-de-camp Captain Molesworth, Colonel Bingfield, his equerry, who held the stirrup, had his head carried off by a cannon ball. The imminent danger of their beloved general, however, revived the spirit of the troops. The dreadful severity of the cannonade had, during the scuffle, thrown them into disorder; but, re-forming with great celerity, they again returned with desperate resolution to the charge.*

38. The twenty squadrons ordered up from the right restore the battle.

In this emergency, when nothing was as yet decided, the twenty fresh squadrons which Marlborough had so opportunely called up from the Allied right were seen galloping at full speed, but still in regular order, on the plain behind this desperate conflict. Halting directly in rear of the spot where the horse on both sides were so vehemently engaged, they wheeled into line, and advanced in close order and admirable

* Coxe, ii. 347. Kausler, 766, 767.

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array, to the support of the Duke. Encouraged by this powerful reinforcement, the whole Allied cavalry re-formed, and swept forward in three lines, with loud shouts, to the attack of the now intimidated and disheartened French, who no longer withstood the onset, but, turning their horses' heads, fled with precipitation. The low grounds between Ramilies and the old chaussée were quickly passed, and the victorious horse, pressing up the slope on the opposite side, ere long reached the summit of the plateau. The tomb of Ottomond, the highest point, and visible from the whole field of battle, was soon seen resplendent with sabres and cuirasses, amidst a throng of horse; and deafening shouts, heard over the whole extent of both armies, announced that the crowning point and key of the whole position had been gained.*

39. Villeroi's efforts to restore the battle, which are unsuccessful.

But Villeroi was an able and determined general, and his soldiers fought with the inherent bravery of the French nation. The contest, thus virtually decided, was not yet over. A fierce fight was raging around Ramilies, where the garrison of twenty French battalions opposed a stout resistance to Schultz's grenadiers. By degrees, however, the latter gained ground; two Swiss battalions, which had long and resolutely held their ground, were at length forced back into the village, and some of the nearest houses fell into the hands of the Allies. Upon this the whole rushed forward, and drove the enemy in a mass out towards the high grounds in the rear. The Marquis Maffei, however, rallied

* Kausler, 767, 768. Coxe, ii. 348.

two regiments of Cologne guards, in a hollow way leading up from the village to the plateau, and opposed so vigorous a resistance that he not only checked the pursuit but regained part of the village. But Marlborough, whose eye was every where, no sooner saw this than he ordered up twenty battalions which had been stationed in reserve behind the centre, and speedily cleared the village. Maffei, with his gallant troops, being charged in flank by the victorious horse at the very time that he was driven out of the village by the infantry, was made prisoner, and almost all his men were taken or destroyed.*

40. The enemy, though thrown into disorder, endeavour to rally.

The victory was now decided on the British left and centre, where alone the real attack had been made. But so vehement had been the onset, so desperate the passage of arms which had taken place, that though the battle had lasted little more than three hours, the victors were nearly in as great disorder as the vanquished. Horse, foot, and artillery, were every where blended together in confusion, more especially between Ramilies and the Mehaigne, and thence up to the tomb of Ottomond, in consequence of the various charges of all arms which had so rapidly succeeded each other on the same narrow space. Marlborough, seeing this, and before attempting any thing more, halted his troops on the ground where they stood, which, in the left and centre, had been occupied by the enemy at the commencement of the action. Villeroi skilfully availed himself of this breathing-time to endeavour to re-form his broken troops, and to take up a new line from Geest-a-Gerom-

* Coxe, ii. 348. Kausler, 767, 768. Maffei, *Memoirs*, 347.

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pont, on his right, through Offuz to Autre Eglise, still held by its original garrison, on his left. But in making the retrograde movement, so as to get his men into this oblique position, he was even more impeded and thrown into disorder by the baggage waggons and dismounted guns on the heights, than the Allies had been on the plain below.

41. General advance of the Allies, which completes the victory.

On observing this, Marlborough resolved to give the enemy no time to rally, but again sounding the charge, ordered infantry and cavalry to advance. A strong column passed the morass in which the Little Gheet takes its rise, directing their steps towards Offuz; but the enemy, panic-struck as at Waterloo, by the general advance of the victors, gave way on all sides. Offuz was abandoned without a shot being fired, the cavalry pursued the fugitives with headlong fury, and the plateau of Mont St André was soon covered with the flying enemy. The troops in observation on the right, seeing the victory gained on the left and centre, of their own accord joined in the pursuit, and soon made themselves masters of Autre Eglise and the heights behind it. The Spanish and Bavarian horse-guards made a gallant attempt to stem the flood of disaster, but without attaining their object. This only led to their own destruction. General Wood and Colonel Wyndham, at the head of the English horse-guards, charged them, and they were immediately cut to pieces. The rout now became universal, and all resistance ceased. In frightful confusion, a disorganised mass of horse and foot, abandoning their guns, streamed over the plateau, poured

headlong, on the other side, down the banks of the Great Gheet, and fled towards Louvain, which they reached in the most dreadful disorder at two o'clock in the morning. The British horse, under Lord Orkney, did not draw bridle from the pursuit till they reached the neighbourhood of that fortress; having, besides fighting the battle, ridden full five-and-twenty miles that day. Marlborough halted for the night, and established head-quarters at Mildert, thirteen miles from the field of battle, and five from Louvain.*

42. Losses of the French and the Allies in the battle.

The trophies of the battle of Ramilies were immense; but they were even exceeded by its results. The loss of the French in killed and wounded was 7000 men, and, in addition to that, 6000 prisoners were taken. With the desertions which took place after the battle, they were weakened by fully 15,000 men. They lost fifty-two guns, their whole baggage and pontoon train, all their caissons, and eighty standards wrested from them in fair fight. Among the prisoners were the Princes de Soubise and Rohan, and a son of Marshal Tallard. The victors lost 1066 killed, and 2567 wounded, in all, 3633. The great and unusual proportion of the killed to the wounded, shows how desperate the fighting had been, and how much of it, as in ancient warfare, had been in hand-to-hand contest. Overkirk nobly supported the Duke in this action, and not only repeatedly charged at the head of his horse, but continued on horseback in the pursuit till one in the morning, when he narrowly escaped death from a Bavarian officer he had

* COXE, ii. 348, 349. *Mem. de Marquis Maffei*, 349, 350. KAUSLER, 768.

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made prisoner, and to whom he had given back his sword, saying, "You are a gentleman, and may keep it." The base wretch no sooner got it into his hand than he made a lounge at the Dutch general, but fortunately missed his blow, and was immediately cut down for his treachery by Overkirk's orderly.*

43. And its great results.

The immediate result of this splendid victory was the acquisition of nearly all Austrian Flanders. Brussels, Louvain, Mechlin, Alort, Luise, and nearly all the great towns of Brabant, opened their gates immediately after it. Ghent and Bruges speedily followed the example; and Daun and Oudenarde soon declared for the Austrian cause. Of all the towns in Flanders, Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, and Dunkirk alone held out for the French; and to their reduction the Duke immediately turned his attention. The public transports in Holland knew no bounds; they much exceeded what had been felt for the victory of Blenheim, for that only saved Germany, but this delivered themselves. The wretched jealousy which had so long thwarted the Duke, as it does every other really great man, was fairly overpowered in "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." In England, the rejoicings were equally enthusiastic, and a solemn thanksgiving at St Paul's, which the Queen attended in person, gave a willing vent to the general thankfulness. "Faction and the French," as Bolingbroke expressed it,† were all that Marlborough had to

* KAUSLER, 769. COXE, ii. 350–353.

† "This vast addition of renown which your Grace has acquired, and the wonderful preservation of your life, are subjects upon which I can never express a thousandth part of what I feel. *France and*

fear, and he had fairly conquered both. Above all, the magnitude of his renown, rid him for a time, at least, of those vexatious councils of war which had so often thwarted his best-laid plans. But the snake, though scotched, was not killed, and but replenished its venom, and prepared future stings, even during the roar of triumphant cannon, and the festive blaze of rejoicing cities.*

44. Retreat of the French from Flanders, and universal joy at its liberation.

The French, after this terrible defeat, retired in the deepest dejection towards French Flanders, leaving garrisons in the principal fortresses which still held out for them. Marlborough made his triumphant entry into Brussels in great pomp on the 28th May, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. The Three Estates of Brabant, assembled there, acknowledged Charles III. for their sovereign, and received, in return, a guarantee from the English government and the States-general, that the *joyeuse entrée*, the Magna Charta of Flanders, should be faithfully observed. "Every where," says Marlborough, "the joy was great at being delivered from the insolence and exactions of the French." The victory of Ramilies produced no less effect on the

faction are the only enemies England has to fear, and your Grace will conquer both; at least, while you beat the French, you give a strength to the government which the other dares not contend with."—*Bolingbroke to Marlborough*, May 28, 1706. COXE, ii. 358.

* "I shall attend the Queen at the thanksgiving on Thursday next: I assure you I shall do it, from every vein within me, having scarce any thing else to support either my head or heart. The *animosity and inveteracy one has to struggle against is unimaginable*, not to mention the difficulty of obtaining things to be done that are reasonable, or of satisfying people with reason when they are done." —*Godolphin to Marlborough*, May 24, 1706.

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northern courts, whose jealousies and lukewarmness had hitherto proved so pernicious to the common cause. The King of Prussia, who had hitherto kept aloof, and suspended the march of his troops, now, on the mediation of Marlborough, became reconciled to the Emperor and the States-general; and the Elector of Hanover, forgetting his apprehensions about the English succession, was among the foremost to offer his congratulations, and make a tender of his forces to the now triumphant cause. It is seldom that the prosperous want friends.

45. Magnanimous wisdom of Marlborough in protecting the Flemings from oppression.

The Dutch, upon the submission of Brabant, were anxious to levy contributions in it as a conquered country, for the purpose of relieving themselves of part of the expenses of the war; and Godolphin, actuated by the same short-sighted views, was eager to replenish the English exchequer from the same source. But Marlborough, like Wellington in after days, had magnanimity and wisdom enough to see the folly, as well as injustice, of thus alienating infant allies at the moment of their conversion; and he combated the project so successfully, that it was abandoned.* At the same time, he preserved the strictest discipline on the part of his troops, and took every imaginable precaution to secure the affections and allay the apprehensions of the inhabitants of the ceded provinces. The good effects of this wise and conciliatory policy were soon apparent. Without firing a shot, the Allies gained greater advantages during the remainder of the campaign, than they could have done by a series of bloody sieges, and the sacrifice of thirty thou-

* *Duke of Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley*, June 14, 1706.

sand men. Nor was it less advantageous to the English general than to the common cause: for it delivered him, for that season at least, from the thraldom of a council of war, the invariable resource of a weak, as it is the aversion of a lofty mind.*

46. Capitulation of Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, and Oudenarde.

The Estates of Brabant, assembled at Brussels, sent injunctions to the governor of Antwerp, Ghent, and all the other fortresses within their territories, to declare for Charles III., and admit their troops. The effect of this, in connexion with the well known discipline preserved by the Allied army, and the protection from contributions, was very decided. No sooner were the orders received at Antwerp, than a schism broke out between the French regiments in the garrison and the Walloon guards. The latter declared for Charles III.; and the approach of Marlborough's army, and the intelligence of the submission of the other cities of Brabant, brought matters to a crisis. After some altercation, it was agreed, that the French troops should march out with the honours of war, and be escorted to Bouchain, within the frontier of their own country. Accordingly, on the 6th June this magnificent fortress, which it had cost the Prince of Parma so vast an expenditure of

* "The consequences of this battle are likely to be greater than that of Blenheim; for we have now the whole summer before us, and, with the blessing of God, I will make the best use of it. *For as I have had no council of war before this battle, so I hope to have none during the whole campaign;* and I think we may make such work of it as may give the Queen the glory of making a safe and honourable peace, for the blessing of God is certainly with us."—*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin*, May 27, 1706. COXE, ii. 365.

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blood and treasure to reduce, and which Napoleon said was itself worth a kingdom, was gained without firing a shot. Oudenarde, which had been in vain besieged in the last war by William III., at the head of sixty thousand men, immediately followed the same example; and Ghent and Bruges besides speedily opened their gates. Flanders, bristling with fortresses, the possession of which in the early part of the war had been of such signal service to the French, was, with the exception of Ostend, Dunkirk, and two or three smaller places, entirely gained by the consternation produced by this single battle. Well might Marlborough say, "The consequences of our victory are almost incredible. A whole country, with so many strong places, delivered up without the least resistance, shows, not only the great loss they must have sustained, but likewise the terror and consternation they are in."*

47. Marlborough's hopes for a speedy peace.

At this period, Marlborough hoped the war would be speedily brought to a close, and that a glorious peace would reward his own and his country's efforts. His thoughts constantly reverted, as his private correspondence shows, to home, quiet, and domestic happiness. To the Duchess he wrote at this period—"You are very kind in desiring I would not expose myself. Be assured, I love you so well, and am so desirous of ending my days quietly with you, that I shall not venture myself but when it is absolutely necessary: and I am sure you are so kind to me, and wish so well to the

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Harley*, 3d June, 1706. *Marl. Disp.* ii. 554.

common cause, that you had rather see me dead than not do my duty. I am persuaded that this campaign will bring in a good peace; and I beg of you to do all that you can, that the house of Woodstock may be carried up as much as possible, that I may have the prospect of living in it."* But these anticipations were not to be realised; and before he sank into old age the hero was destined to drain to the dregs the cup of envy, jealousy, and ingratitude.

48. Siege and capture of Ostend.

His first step of importance, after consolidating these important conquests, and preventing the cupidity of the Dutch from forcing contributions on the inhabitants, which would only have endangered his conquests before they were well secured, was to undertake the siege of Ostend, the most considerable place in Flanders which still held out for the French interest. This place, celebrated for its great strength and the long siege of three years which it had stood against the Spanish under Spinola, was expected to make a very protracted resistance; but such was the terror now inspired by Marlborough's name, that it was reduced much sooner than had been anticipated. Every preparation had been made for a vigorous defence. A fleet of nine ships of the line lay off the harbour, and a formidable besieging train was brought up from Antwerp and Brussels. Trenches were opened on the 28th June; the counterscarp was blown in on the 6th July; and the day following, the besieged, after a fruitless sally, capitulated, and the Flemish part of the garrison entered the service of the

* *Marlborough to Duchess of Marlborough*, May 31, 1706.

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Allies. The garrison was five thousand strong when it surrendered; two ships of the line were taken in the harbour; and the total loss of the besiegers was only five hundred men.

49. Commencement of the siege of Menin, and its great difficulties.

Menin was next besieged; but it made a more protracted resistance. Its great strength consisted in the means which the governor of the fortress possessed of flooding at will the flat and extensive plains in which it is situated. Its fortifications had always been reckoned among one of Vauban's masterpieces; the garrison was ample; and the governor, who was a man of resolution, was encouraged to make a vigorous resistance, by assurances of succour made to him by the French government. In short, Louis XIV. had made the greatest efforts to repair the consequences of the disaster at Ramilies. Marshal Marsin had been detached from the Rhine with eighteen battalions and fourteen squadrons; and, in addition to that, thirty battalions and forty squadrons were marching from Alsace. These great reinforcements, with the addition of nine battalions which were in the lines on the Dyle when the battle of Ramilies was fought, would, when all assembled, have raised the French army to one hundred and ten battalions, and one hundred and forty squadrons—or above ninety thousand men; whereas Marlborough, after employing thirty-two battalions in the siege, could only spare for the covering army about seventy-two battalions, and eighty squadrons. The numerical superiority, therefore, was very great on the side of the enemy, especially when the Allies were divided by the

necessity of carrying on the siege; and Villeroi, who had lost the confidence of his men, had been replaced by one of the best generals in the French service, the Duke de Vendôme, already illustrious by his recent victory over the Imperialists in Italy. He openly avowed his intention to raise the siege, and, as if with that view, he approached the covering army closely. But Marlborough persevered in his design; for, to use his own words, "the Elector of Bavaria says, he is promised a hundred and ten battalions, and they are certainly stronger in horse than we. But even if they had greater numbers, I neither think it is their interest nor their inclination to venture a battle; for our men are in heart, and theirs are cowed."*

50. It is at length carried by assault, Aug. 22.

Considerable difficulties were experienced in the first instance in bringing forward the siege equipage, in consequence of the inundations which the governor had let loose; but a drought having set in in the beginning of August, before the blockade began, these obstacles were soon overcome, and on the 9th August the besiegers' fire opened, while Marlborough took post at Helchin to cover the siege. On the 18th, the fire of the breaching batteries had been so effectual, that it was deemed practicable to make an assault on the covered way; and as a determined resistance was anticipated, the Duke repaired to the spot to superintend the attack. At seven in the evening, the signal was given by the explosion of two mines, and the troops, with the English in front, rushed

* *Marlborough to Secretary Harley*, Helchin, 9th August, 1706. *Disp.* iii. 69.

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to the assault. They soon cut down the palisades, and, throwing their grenades before them, ere long got into the covered way; but they were there exposed to a dreadful fire from two ravelins which enfiladed it. For two hours they bore it without flinching, labouring hard to erect barricades so as to get under cover; but this was not accomplished before fourteen hundred of the brave assailants had been struck down. The success, though so dearly purchased, was decisive. The establishment of the besiegers in this important lodgment, in the heart, as it were, of their works, so distressed the enemy, that on the 22d they hoisted the white flag, and capitulated on the following day, though still 4300 strong. The reduction of this strong and celebrated fortress gave the most unbounded satisfaction to the Allies, as it not only materially strengthened the barrier against France, but, having taken place in presence of the Duke de Vendôme and his powerful army, drawn together with such diligence to raise the siege, it afforded the strongest proof of the superiority the Allies had now acquired over their enemy in the field.*

51. Siege and fall of Dendermonde, September 5.

Upon the fall of Menin, Vendôme collected his troops, and took up a position behind the Lys and the Dyle, in order to cover Lille, against which he supposed the intentions of Marlborough were next to be directed. But the Duke had another object in view, for he immediately sat down before Dendermonde, still keeping post with his covering army at Helchin, so as to bar the access to that fortress. Being situated on the banks of the Scheldt, it

* *Marlborough to Duke of Savoy*, Helchin, 25th August 1706. *Marl. Disp.* iii. 101.

was so completely within the power of the governor to hinder the approaches of the besiegers, by letting out the waters, that the King of France said, on hearing they had commenced its siege—"They must have an army of ducks to take it." An extraordinary drought at this period, however, which lasted seven weeks, had so lowered the Scheldt and canals, that the approaches were pushed with great celerity, and on the 5th September the garrison surrendered at discretion. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin on this occasion—"The taking of Dendermonde, making the garrison prisoners of war, was more than could have been expected; but I saw they were in a consternation. That place could never have been taken but by the hand of God, which gave us seven weeks without rain. The rain began the day after we had taken possession, and continued without intermission for the three next days."*

52. And of Ath, which concludes the campaign, October 4.

Ath was the next object of attack. This small but strong fortress was of great importance, as lying on the direct road from Mons to Brussels by Halle; and, in consequence of that circumstance, it was rendered a fortress of the first order, when the barrier of strongholds, insanely demolished by Joseph II. before the war of the Revolution, was restored by the Allies, under the direction of Wellington, after its termination. Marlborough intrusted the direction of the attack to Overkirk, while he himself occupied, with the covering army, the position of Leuze. Vendôme's army was so much discouraged that he did not venture to disturb the opera-

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, September 4, 1706. Coxe, iii. 10.

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tions of Marlborough ; but retiring behind the Scheldt, between Condé and Montagne, contented himself with throwing strong garrisons into Mons and Charleroi, which he apprehended would be the next objects of attack. The operations of the besiegers against Ath were pushed with great vigour till the 4th October, when the garrison, eight hundred strong, all that remained out of two thousand who manned the works when the siege began, surrendered as prisoners of war. Marlborough was very urgent after this success to undertake the siege of Mons, which would have completed the conquest of Brabant and Flanders ; but he could not persuade the Dutch authorities to furnish him with the requisite stores.* After a parade of his army in the open field near Cambron, in the hope of drawing Vendôme, who boasted of having one hundred and forty battalions and one hundred and eighty squadrons at his command, to a battle, in which he was disappointed, Marlborough resigned the command to Overkirk, put the army into winter quarters, and hastened to Brussels, to commence the arduous duty of endeavouring to compose the jealousies and secure the union of the discordant powers of the alliance.†

* "If the Dutch can furnish ammunition for the siege of Mons, we shall undertake it; for if the weather continues fair, we shall have it much cheaper this year than the next, when they have had time to recruit their army. The taking of that town would be a very great advantage to us for the opening of next campaign, which we must make if we would bring France to such a peace as will give us quiet hereafter."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, October 14, 1706. Coxe, iii. 14.

† "M. de Vendôme tells his officers he has one hundred and forty battalions and one hundred and eighty squadrons, and that, if my Lord Marlborough gives him an opportunity, he will pay him a

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53. Splendid reception of Marlborough at Brussels, and great results of the campaign.

Marlborough was received in the most splendid manner, and with unbounded demonstrations of joy, at Brussels, not only by the inconstant populace, but by the deputies of the Three Estates of Brabant, which were assembled there in regular and permanent sovereignty. Well might they lavish their demonstrations of respect and gratitude on the English general; for never in modern times had more important or glorious events signalised a successful campaign. In five months the power of France had been so completely broken, and the towering temper of its inhabitants so lowered, that their best general, at the head of above a hundred thousand men, did not venture to measure swords with the Allies, who were only about two-thirds of their numerical strength in the field. By the effects of a single victory, the whole of Brabant and Flanders, studded with the strongest fortresses in Europe, each of which, in former wars, had required months—some, years—for their reduction, had been gained to the Allied arms. Between those taken on the field of Ramilies, and subsequently in the besieged fortresses, above twenty thousand men had been made prisoners, and twice that number lost to the enemy by the sword, sickness, and desertion. France now made head against the Allies in Flanders only by drawing together her forces from all other quarters, and starving the war in Italy and on the

visit before this campaign ends. I believe he has neither will nor power to do it, which we shall see quickly, for we are now camped in so open a country that if he marches to us we cannot refuse fighting." —*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin*, October 14, 1706. *Ibid.*

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Rhine, besides straining every nerve in the interior. This state of almost frenzied exertion could not last. Already the effects of Marlborough's triumph at the commencement of the campaign had appeared, in the total defeat of the French in their lines before Turin, by Prince Eugene, on the 18th September, and their expulsion from Italy. It was the reinforcements procured for him, and withheld from his opponents, by Marlborough, which obtained for the Prince this glorious victory, at which the English general, with the generosity of true greatness, rejoiced even more sincerely than he had done in any triumphs of his own;* while Eugene, with equal greatness of mind, was the first to ascribe his success mainly to the succours sent him by the Duke of Marlborough.†

54. Splendid and disinterested conduct of Marlborough in refusing the government of the Netherlands.

But all are not Marlboroughs or Eugenes: the really great alone can witness success without envy, or achieve it without selfishness. In the base herd of ignoble men who profited by the efforts of these great

* "I have now received confirmation of the success in Italy, from the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene, and it is impossible for me to express the joy it has given me; *for I not only esteem, but really love, that Prince.* This glorious action must bring France so low, that if our friends can be persuaded to carry on the war one year longer with vigour, we could not fail, with God's blessing, to have such a peace as would give us quiet in our days. But the Dutch are at this time unaccountable."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, Sept. 26, 1706. COXE, iii. 20, 21.

† "Your highness, I am sure, will rejoice at the signal advantage which the arms of his Imperial Majesty and the Allies have gained. *You have had so great a hand in it, by the succours you have procured*, that you must permit me to thank you again."—*Eugene to Marlborough*, 20th Sept. 1706. COXE, iii. 20.

leaders, the malignant passions were rapidly gaining strength by the very magnitude of the triumphs. The removal of danger was producing its usual effect of reviving jealousy among the Allies. Conquest was spreading its invariable discord by inciting cupidity in the distribution of its fruits. These divisions had appeared soon after the battle of Ramilies, when the Emperor Joseph, as a natural mark of gratitude to the general who had delivered his people from their oppressors, as well as from a regard to his own interests, appointed Marlborough to the general command as viceroy of the Netherlands. The English general was highly gratified by this mark of confidence and gratitude; and the appointment was cordially approved of by Queen Anne and the English cabinet, who without hesitation authorised Marlborough to accept the proffered dignity. But the Dutch, who had already begun to conceive projects of ambition by an accession of territory to themselves on the side of Flanders, evinced such dislike to this appointment, as tending to throw the administration of the Netherlands entirely into the hands of the English and Austrians, that Marlborough had the magnanimity to solicit permission to decline an honour which threatened to breed disunion in the alliance.* This conduct was as disin-

* "This appointment by the Emperor has given some uneasiness in Holland, by thinking that the Emperor has a mind to put the power in this country into the Queen's hands, in order that they may have nothing to do with it. If I should find the same thing by the Pensionary, and that nothing can cure this jealousy but my desiring to be excused from accepting this commission, I hope the Queen will allow of it; for the advantage and honour I have by this commission

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terested as it was patriotic; for the emoluments of the government, thus refused from a desire for the public good, were no less than sixty thousand pounds a-year.

55. Jealousies of the Dutch, and continued disinterestedness of Marlborough.

Although, however, Marlborough thus renounced this splendid appointment, the court of Vienna were not equally tractable. It evinced the utmost jealousy at the no longer disguised desire of the Dutch to gain an accession of territory, and the barrier of which they were so passionately desirous, at the expense of the Austrian Netherlands. The project also got wind, and the Catholic inhabitants of Brabant, whom difference of religion and old-established national rivalry had long alienated from the Dutch, were so much alarmed at the prospect of being transferred to their hated Protestant neighbours, that the proposal at once cooled their ardour in the cause of the alliance, and went far to sow the seeds of irrepressible dissension among them. The Emperor, therefore, again pressed the appointment on Marlborough; but from the same lofty motives he continued to decline, professing a willingness, at the same time, to give the Emperor privately every assistance in his power in the exercise of the new government; so that the Emperor was obliged to give a reluctant consent.

is *very insignificant in comparison of the fatal consequences that might be if it should cause a jealousy between the two nations.* And though the appointments of this government are *sixty thousand pounds a-year*, I shall with pleasure excuse myself, since I am convinced it is for her service, if the States should not make it their request, which they are very far from doing."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 1 and 8, 1706. Coxe, iii. 391-393.

Notwithstanding this refusal, the jealousy of the Dutch was such, that on the revival of a report that the appointment had been actually conferred on the Duke of Marlborough, they were thrown into such a ferment, that in the public congress the Pensionary could not avoid exclaiming in the presence of the English ambassador, "Mon Dieu! est-il possible qu'on voudrait faire ce pas sans notre participation?"*

56. Opening of a separate secret negotiation between the Dutch and French.

The French government were soon informed of this jealousy, and of the open desire of the Dutch for an accession of territory on the side of Flanders, at the expense of Austria; and they took advantage of it, early in the summer of 1706, to open a secret negotiation with the States-general for the conclusion of a separate peace with that republic. The basis of this accommodation was to be a renunciation by the Duke of Anjou of his claim to the crown of Spain, upon receiving an equivalent in Italy: he offered to recognise Anne as Queen of England, and professed the utmost readiness to secure for the Dutch, *at the expense of Austria*, that barrier in the Netherlands, to which he conceived them to be so well entitled. These proposals elated the Dutch government to such a degree, that they began to take a high hand, and assume a dictatorial tone at the Hague: and it was the secret belief that they would, if matters came to extremities, be supported by France in this exorbitant demand for a slice of Austria, that made them resist so strenuously the

* *Mr Stepney to Duke of Marlborough*, Hague, Jan. 4, 1707. COXE, ii. 407.

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government of the Low Countries being placed in such firm and vigorous hands as those of Marlborough. Matters had therefore come to such a pass in October and November, 1706, that Godolphin regarded the state of affairs as desperate, and thought that the alliance was on the point of being dissolved.* Thus was Marlborough's usual winter campaign with the confederates rendered more difficult on this than it had been on any preceding occasion; for he had now to contend with the consequences of his own success, allay the jealousies and stifle the cupidity which had sprung up in the prospect of that magnificent spoil which he himself had laid at the feet of the Allies.

57. Marlborough's address obtains a renewal of the alliance.

But in this dangerous crisis, Marlborough's great diplomatic ability, consummate address, and thorough devotion to the common good, stood him in as good stead as his military talents had done him in the preceding campaign with Villeroi and Vendôme. In the beginning of November, he repaired to the Hague, and though he found the Dutch in the first instance so extravagant in their ideas of the barrier they were to obtain, that he despaired of effecting any settlement of the differences between them and the Emperor;† yet he

* "Lord Somers has shown me a long letter which he has had from the Pensionary, very intent *upon settling the barrier*. The inclinations of the Dutch are so violent and plain, that I am of opinion nothing will be able to prevent their taking effect but our being as plain with them upon the same subject, and threatening to publish to the whole world the terms for which they solicit."—*Lord Godolphin to Marlborough*, Oct. 24, 1706. COXE, iii. 74.

† "My inclinations will lead me to stay as little as possible at the Hague, though the Pensionary tells me I must stay to finish the

at length succeeded, though with very great difficulty, in appeasing, for the time, the jealousies between them and the cabinet of Vienna, and also in obtaining a public renewal of the alliance for the prosecution of the war. The publication of this treaty diffused the utmost satisfaction among the ministers of the Allied powers assembled at the Hague; and this was further increased by the breaking off, at the same time, of a negotiation which had been pending for some months between Marlborough and the Elector of Bavaria, for a separate treaty with that prince, who had become disgusted with the French alliance. But all Marlborough's efforts failed to accomplish any adjustment of the disputed matter of the barrier, on which the Dutch were so obstinately set; and, finding them equally unreasonable and intractable on that subject, he deemed himself fortunate when he obtained the adjourning of the question, by the consent of all concerned, till the conclusion of a general peace.

58. His return to England, and splendid reception there.

After the adjustment of this delicate and perilous negotiation, Marlborough returned to England, where he was received with transports of exultation by all classes. He was conducted in one of the royal carriages, amidst a splendid procession of all the nobility of the

succession treaty and their barrier, which, should I stay the whole winter, I am very confident would not be brought to perfection. For they are of so many minds, and are all so very extravagant about their barrier, that I despair of doing any thing good till they are more reasonable, which they will not be till they see that they have it not in their power to dispose of the whole Low Countries at their will and pleasure, in which the French flatter them."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Oct. 29, 1706. COXE, iii. 79.

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kingdom, to Temple Bar, where he was received by the city authorities, who feasted him in the most magnificent manner at Vintners' Hall. Thanks were voted to him by both Houses of Parliament; and when he took his seat in the House of Peers, the Lord Keeper addressed him in these just and appropriate terms:—"What your Grace has performed in this last campaign has far exceeded all hopes, even of such as were most affectionate and partial to their country's interest and glory. The advantages you have gained against the enemy are of such a nature, so conspicuous in themselves, so undoubtedly owing to your courage and conduct, so sensibly and universally beneficial to the whole confederacy, that to attempt to adorn them with the colouring of words would be vain and inexcusable. Therefore I decline it, the rather because I should certainly offend that great modesty which alone can and does add lustre to your actions, and which in your Grace's example has successfully withstood as great trials, as that virtue has met with in any instance whatsoever." The House of Commons passed a similar resolution; and the better to testify the national gratitude, an annuity of £5000 a-year, charged upon the Post Office, was settled upon the Duke and Duchess, and their descendants male or female; and his dukedom, which stood limited to heirs-male, was extended also to heirs-female, "in order," as it was finely expressed, "that England might never be without a title which might recall the remembrance of so much glory."

So much glory, however, produced its usual effect in engendering jealousy in little minds. The Whigs had

grown envious of that illustrious pillar of their party; they were tired of hearing him called the just. Both Godolphin and Marlborough became the objects of excessive jealousy to their own party; and this, combined with the rancour of the Tories, who could never forgive his desertion of his early patron the Duke of York, had well-nigh proved fatal to him when at the very zenith of his usefulness and popularity. Intrigue was rife at St James's. Parties were strangely intermixed and disjointed. Some of the moderate Tories were in power; many ambitious Whigs were out of it. Neither party stood on great public principles,—a sure sign of instability in the national councils, and tending to the ultimate neglect of the national interests. Harley's intrigues had become serious, and the prime minister, Godolphin, had threatened to resign. In this alarming juncture of domestic affairs, the presence of Marlborough produced its usual pacifying and benign influence. In a long interview which he had with the Queen on his first private audience, he settled all differences; Godolphin was persuaded to withdraw his resignation; the cabinet was re-constructed on a new and harmonious basis; Harley and Bolingbroke were the only Tories of any note who remained in power; and these new perils to the prosecution of the war, and the cause of European independence, were removed.

59. Jealousy against him arises among both the Whigs and Tories, but he prevails at court.

Marlborough's services to England and the interests of European freedom in this campaign, recall one mournful feeling to the British annalist. All that he had won for his country—all that Wellington, with still greater difficulty, and amidst yet brighter glories, regained

60. Great error in the subsequent policy of England.

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for it, has been lost. It has been lost, too, not by the enemies of the nation, but by itself; not by an opposite faction, but by the very party over whom his own great exploits had shed such imperishable lustre; not amidst national humiliation, but at the height of national glory; not in faithfully defending, but in basely partitioning an ally. Antwerp, the first fruits of Ramilies —Antwerp, the last reward of Waterloo—Antwerp, to hold which against England Napoleon lost his crown, has been abandoned to France.* An English fleet has combined with a French army to tear from Holland the barrier of Dutch independence, and the key to the Low Countries. The barrier so passionately sought by the Dutch, has been wrested from them, and wrested from them by British hands; a revolutionary power has been placed on the throne of Belgium, the theatre of Ramilies and Malplaquet, of Oudenarde and Waterloo. Flanders, instead of the outwork of Europe against France, has become the outwork of France against Europe. The tricolor flag waves in sight of Bergen-op-Zoom; within a month after the first European war, the whole coast from Bayonne to the Texel will be arrayed against Britain! Such is the way in which empires are ruined by the blindness of faction. It is in moments of domestic convulsion, that irrevocable and fatal mistakes in policy are committed by nations; for it is then that the national are absorbed in the social passions, and durable public interests forgotten in passing party contentions.

* "If I could have made up my mind to give up Antwerp, I might have concluded peace at Chatillon."—*Napoleon* in LAS CASES.

CHAPTER IV.

CAMPAIGNS OF 1707 AND 1708.—BATTLE OF OUDENARDE, CAPTURE OF LILLE, AND RECOVERY OF GHENT.

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1. Great disasters experienced by France in the preceding campaign.

THE campaign of 1707 opened under auspices very different to the Allies from any which had preceded it: —Blenheim had saved Germany, Ramilies had delivered Brabant. The power of the Grand Monarque no longer made Europe tremble. The immense advantage which he had gained in the outset of the contest, by the declaration of the governor of Flanders for the cause of the Bourbons, and the consequent transference of the Flemish fortresses into his hands, had been lost. It was more than lost—it had been won to the enemy. Brussels, Antwerp, Menin, Ath, Ostend, Ghent, Dendermonde, Louvain, now acknowledged the Archduke Charles for their sovereign; the states of Brabant had sent in their adhesion to the Grand Alliance. Italy had been lost as rapidly as it had been won; the stroke of Marlborough at Ramilies had been re-echoed at Turin; and Eugene had expelled the French arms from Piedmont as effectually as Marlborough had from Flanders. Reduced on all sides to his own resources, wakened

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from his dream of foreign conquests, Louis XIV. now sought only to defend his own frontier; and the arms which had formerly reached the gates of Amsterdam, and recently carried terror into the centre of Germany, were now reduced to a painful defensive on the Scheldt and the Rhine.

2. Appearance of Charles XII. of Sweden in Germany.

These great advantages would, in all probability, notwithstanding the usual supineness and divisions of the Allied powers, have ensured them the most signal success in the next campaign, had not their attention been, early in spring, arrested, and their efforts paralysed, by a new and formidable actor on the theatre of affairs. This was no less a man than CHARLES XII. KING OF SWEDEN; who, after having defeated the coalition of the northern sovereigns formed for his destruction, dictated peace to Denmark at Copenhagen, dethroned the King of Poland, and well-nigh overturned the empire of Russia—had now planted his victorious standards in the centre of Germany, and at the head of an army fifty thousand strong, and hitherto invincible, had stationed himself at Dresden. There he had become the arbiter of Europe, and in a position to threaten the destruction of either of the parties engaged in the contest on the Rhine against whom he chose to direct his hostility.

3. His character.

This extraordinary man approached closer than any warrior of modern times to the great men of antiquity. More nearly than even Napoleon, he realised the heroes of Plutarch. A Stoic in pacific, he was a Cæsar in military life. He had all their virtues, and a considerable share of their barbarism. Achilles did not surpass

him in the thirst for warlike renown, nor Hannibal in the perseverance of his character and the fruitfulness of his resources; like Alexander, he would have wept because a world did not remain to conquer. Almost unconquerable by fatigue, resolute in determination, and a lion in heart, he knew no fear but that of his glory being tarnished. Endowed by nature with a dauntless soul, a constitution of iron, he was capable of undergoing a greater amount of exertion than any of his soldiers. At the siege of Stralsund, when some of his officers were sinking under the exhaustion of protracted watching, he desired them to retire to rest, and himself took their place. Outstripping his followers in speed, at one time he rode across Germany, almost alone, in an incredibly short space of time: at another, he defended himself for days together, at the head of a handful of attendants, in a barricaded house, against twenty thousand Turks. Wrapt up in the passion for fame, he was insensible to the inferior desires which usually rouse or mislead mankind. Wine had no attractions, women no seductions for him: he was indifferent to personal comforts or accommodations; his fare was as simple, his dress as plain, his lodging as rude, as those of the meanest of his followers. To one end alone his attention was exclusively directed, on one acquisition alone his heart was set. Glory, military glory, was the ceaseless object of his ambition; all lesser desires were concentrated in this ruling passion; for this he lived, for this he died.

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"A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no dangers tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their pow'rs combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
'Think nothing gain'd,' he cries, 'till nought remain:
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.'"*

4. Great military abilities.

That his military abilities were of the very highest order, may be judged of by the fact that, with the resources of the poor monarchy of Sweden, at that period containing less than two millions of inhabitants, he long arrested the efforts of a coalition composed of Russia, Denmark, and Poland, headed by the vast capacity and persevering energy of Peter the Great, and backed by not less than forty millions of subjects under its various sovereigns. Nor let it be said that these nations were rude in the military art, and unfit to contend in the field with the descendants of the followers of Gustavus Adolphus. The Danes are the near neighbours and old enemies of the Swedes; their equals in population, discipline, and warlike resources. Thirty years had not elapsed since the Poles had delivered Europe from Mussulman bondage by the glorious victory of Vienna, gained under John Sobieski, over two hundred thousand Turks. Europe has since had too much reason to know what are the military resources of Russia, against which all the

* JOHNSON'S *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

power of Western Europe, in recent times, has been so signally shattered; and though the soldiers of Peter the Great were very different, in point of discipline, from those that repelled the legions of Napoleon, yet their native courage was the same, and they were directed by an energy and perseverance, on the part of the Czar, which never has been exceeded in warlike annals. What, then, must have been the capacity of the sovereign who, with the resources of a monarchy not equalling those of Scotland at this time, could gain such extraordinary success over so powerful a coalition, from the mere force of military ability, indefatigable energy, and heroic determination!

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Charles, however, had many faults. He was proud, overbearing, and self-willed. Like all men of powerful original genius, he was confident in his own opinion, and took counsel from none; but, unfortunately, he often forgot also to take counsel from himself. He did not always weigh the objections against his designs with sufficient calmness to give them fair play, or allow his heroic followers a practical opportunity of crowning his enterprises with success. He had so often succeeded against desperate, and apparently hopeless, odds, that he thought himself invincible, and rushed headlong into the most dreadful perils, with no other preparation to ward them off, but his own calmness in danger, his inexhaustible fecundity of resources, and the undaunted courage, as well as patience of fatigue and privation, with which he had inspired his followers. It is surprising, however, how often he was extricated from his

5. His faults rashness, and cruelty.

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difficulties by such means. Even in his last expedition against Russia, which terminated in the disaster of Pultowa, he would, to all appearance, have been successful, had the Tartar chief, Mazeppa, proved faithful to his engagement. Like Hannibal, his heroic qualities had inspired a multifarious army—*colluvies omnium gentium*—with one homogeneous spirit, and rendered them subject to his discipline, faithful to his standard, obedient to his will. But in some particulars his private character was still more exceptionable, for it was stained by the vices as well as adorned with the virtues of the savage character. Though not habitually cruel, he was stern, vindictive, and implacable; and his government was sullied by acts of atrocious barbarity at which humanity shudders, and which must ever leave an indelible blot on his memory.

6. Efforts of Louis XIV. to win him to his side.

Louis XIV., in his distress, was naturally anxious to gain the support of an ally so powerful as the Swedish monarch, who was now at Dresden at the head of fifty-three thousand veteran soldiers, ready to fall on the rear of Marlborough's army, then threatening the defensive barrier of France in the Low Countries. Every effort, accordingly, was made to gain Charles over to the French interest. The ancient alliance of France with Sweden, their mutual cause of complaint against the Emperor, the glories of Gustavus Adolphus and the thirty years' war, in which their armies had fought side by side, were held forth to dazzle his imagination or convince his judgment. The Swedish monarch appeared ready to yield to these efforts. He brought forward various real or imaginary

grounds of complaint against the German powers, for infractions of the constitution of the empire, of which he put himself forth as the guarantee, in the capacity of heir to the crown and fame of Gustavus Adolphus, and for sundry insults alleged to have been offered to the Swedish crown or subjects. These various subjects of complaint were sedulously inflamed by the French agents; and the weight of their arguments was not a little increased by the knowledge of the fact, that they were authorised to offer Count Piper, the prime minister of Charles, 300,000 livres (£12,000,) to quicken his movements in favour of the cabinet of Versailles, besides bribes in proportion to the subordinate ministers of the Court of Sweden.*

7. Measures of Marlborough to counteract his efforts,

Marlborough very naturally felt extremely uneasy at this negotiation, which he soon discovered by secret information, as well as from the undisguised reluctance of the German powers to furnish the contingents which they were bound to supply for the ensuing campaign. Indeed, it could hardly be expected that the Northern powers in Germany should send their chief disposable forces to swell Marlborough's army beyond the Rhine, when so warlike a monarch, at the head of fifty thousand men, was in the centre of the empire, with his intentions as yet undeclared, and exposed to the influence of every imaginable seduction. General Grumbkow, an adroit and intelligent diplomatist, who had been sent by the King of Prussia on a mission to

* Coxe, iii. 156. *Instructions pour le Sieur Recoux. Cardonell Papers*, 137–149.

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the Allied head-quarters, was accordingly despatched to Dresden, to endeavour to ascertain the real intentions of the Swedish monarch. He was not long of discovering that Charles had assumed an angry tone towards the confederates only in order to extract favourable terms of accommodation from them, and that Muscovy was the real object on which the King's heart was set. The despatches which the General transmitted to Marlborough convey a curious and highly interesting picture of Charles and the Swedish court and army at this important juncture.* The negotiation went on for some time

* "Count Piper said, 'We made war on Poland only to subsist; our design in Saxony is only to terminate the war; but for the Muscovite he shall pay *les pots cassées*, and we will treat the Czar in a manner which posterity will hardly believe.'. I secretly wished that already he was in the heart of Muscovy. After dinner he conveyed me to head-quarters, and introduced me to his Majesty. He asked me whence I came, and where I had served. I replied, and mentioned my good fortune in having served three campaigns under your Highness. He questioned me much, particularly concerning your Highness and the English troops; and you may readily believe that I delineated my hero in the most lively and natural colours. Among other particulars, he asked me if your Highness yourself led the troops to the charge. I replied, that as all the troops were animated with the same ardour for fighting, that was not necessary; but that you were every where, and always in the hottest of the action, and gave your orders with that coolness which excites general admiration. I then related to him that you had been thrown from your horse, the death of your aide-de-camp Borafield, and many other things. He took great pleasure in this recital, and made me repeat the same thing twice. I also said that your Highness always spoke of his Majesty with esteem and admiration, and ardently desired to pay you his respects. He observed, 'That is not likely; but I should be delighted to see a general of whom I have heard so much.' They intend vigorously to attack the Muscovites, and expect to dethrone the Czar, compelling him to discharge all his foreign officers, and pay several millions as an

with varying success; but at length matters were brought to a crisis, by the King of Sweden declaring that he would treat with none but Marlborough in person.

This immediately led to the English general repairing to the court of Charles XII. at Dresden. He left the Hague on the 20th April accordingly; and after visiting Hanover on the way, where, as usual, there were some jealousies to appease, arrived at the Swedish camp of Alt-Ranstadt on the 28th. The Duke drove immediately to the head-quarters of Count Piper, from whom he received the most flattering assurance of the gratification which the Swedish monarch had felt at his arrival. He was shortly after introduced to the monarch, to whom he delivered a letter from the Queen of England, and at the same time addressed him in the following flattering terms:—"I present to your Majesty a letter, not from the Chancery, but from the heart, of the Queen my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea, to see a prince admired by the whole universe. I am in this particular more happy than the Queen, and I wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a general as

8. Visit of Marlborough to Charles at Dresden.

indemnity. Should he refuse such conditions, the King is resolved to exterminate the Muscovites, and make their country a desert. God grant he may persist in this decision, rather than demand the restitution, as some assert, of the Protestant churches in Silesia! The Swedes in general are modest, but do not scruple to declare themselves invincible when the King is at their head." — *General Grumbkow to Marlborough*, January 11 and 31, 1707. COXE, iii. 159–161.

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your Majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know in the art of war." *

9. His address and success with that monarch.

This adroit compliment from a commander so great and justly celebrated, produced an immediate effect on the Swedish monarch, who was passionately desirous of military glory. His satisfaction was visible in his countenance, and he returned a gracious answer in these terms:—"The Queen of Great Britain's letter and your person are both very acceptable to me, and I shall always have the utmost regard for the interposition of her Britannic Majesty and the interests of the Grand Alliance. It is much against my will that I have been obliged to give umbrage to any of the parties engaged in it. I have had just cause to come into this country with my troops; but you may assure the Queen, my sister, that my design is to depart from hence as soon as I have obtained the satisfaction I demand, but not till then. However, I shall do nothing that can tend to the prejudice of the common cause in general, or of the Protestant religion, of which I shall always glory to be a zealous protector." This favourable answer was immediately followed by an invitation to dine with the King, who placed him at his right hand, and honoured him with the most flattering attention. In the course of the evening the conversation turned chiefly on military matters, in which Marlborough exerted him-

* COXE, iii. 167-169. The authenticity of this speech is placed beyond doubt by Lediard, who was then in Saxony, and gives it *verbatim*. See LEDIARD, ii. 126.

self with such skill and success, that he obtained another long private audience of Charles; and before his departure, that monarch even exceeded his views, by declaring that there could be no security for the peace of Europe till France was reduced to the rank she held at the date of the treaty of Westphalia.

10. Singular skill with which he avoided rousing religious differences.

Though the address and abilities of Marlborough, however, had thus removed the chief danger to be apprehended from the presence of the Swedish monarch at Dresden, yet other matters of great delicacy remained behind for adjustment, requiring all his prudence and skill to bring to a satisfactory issue. Not the least of these difficulties arose from the zeal of the King of Sweden for the protection of the Protestant religion, and his desire to revive and secure the privileges granted to the German Protestants by the treaty of Westphalia. As Marlborough justly apprehended that the court of Vienna might take umbrage at these demands, and so be diverted from the objects of the Grand Alliance, he exerted himself to the utmost to convince his Majesty that the great object in the mean time, even as regarded the Protestant faith, was to humble the French monarch, who had shown himself its inveterate enemy by the atrocious persecutions consequent on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and that, if this were once done, the Emperor would be unable to prevent the insertion of the requisite stipulations in favour of the Reformed faith in the general treaty of peace which would follow. Charles was convinced by these arguments, which, in truth, were well-founded, and even went so far as to

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propose a secret convention with England for the promotion of the Protestant interest; a proposal most embarrassing at the moment when Great Britain was in close alliance with the Emperor, which Marlborough contrived to elude with admirable dexterity.

11. His satisfactory arrangement of the difficulties regarding Poland.

Another matter of great delicacy was the conduct to be observed towards the dethroned King of Poland, Augustus, who was also at Dresden, and of course viewed the close intimacy between Marlborough and his formidable enemy Charles with the utmost jealousy. But here, also, the diplomatic skill of the English general overcame all difficulties; for by skilfully taking advantage of the pecuniary embarrassments into which the king had fallen after his territories had been ravaged and exhausted by the Swedish forces, and by engaging that the Emperor should take a large part of the Polish forces into his pay, he succeeded at once in gaining over the dethroned monarch, and securing a considerable body of fresh troops for the service of the Allies. By these means, aided by judiciously bestowing on Count Piper and the chief Swedish ministers considerable pensions, which were paid in advance, Marlborough succeeded in entirely allaying the storm that had threatened his rear. He accordingly left the Saxon capital, after a residence of ten days, perfectly confident in the pacific intentions of the Swedish monarch, and having fully divined the intended direction of his forces towards Moscow.*

The brilliant success with which this delicate and important negotiation had been concluded, naturally

* Coxe, iii. 174-182.

induced a hope that vigorous operations would be undertaken by the Allied powers, and that the great successes of the preceding campaign would be so far improved, as to compel the court of France to submit to such terms as the peace of Europe, and the independence of the adjoining states, required. The result, however, was quite the reverse, and Marlborough had again the indescribable mortification of seeing month after month of the summer of 1707 glide away, without a single measure conducive to the success of the common cause, or worthy of the real strength of the Allied powers, having been attempted. They had all relapsed into their former and fatal jealousies and procrastination. The Dutch, notwithstanding the inestimable services which Marlborough had rendered to their republic, had again become distrustful, and authorised their field-deputies to thwart and mar all his operations. They made no secret of their resolution, that their interests being now secured, the blood and treasure of the United Provinces should no longer be expended on enterprises in which the Emperor or Queen of England was alone concerned.

12. Renewed jealousies and procrastinations of the Allied Powers.

They never failed accordingly to interfere when any aggressive movement was in contemplation. Even when the Duke, in the course of his skilful marches and countermarches, had gained the opportunity for which he longed, of bringing the enemy to an engagement on terms approaching to an equality, they never failed to interpose with their fatal negative, and prevent any thing being attempted. They did this, in particular, under

13. The Dutch deputies thwart Marlborough near Nivelles, 27th May.

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the most vexatious circumstances, on the 27th May, near Nivelles, where Marlborough had brought his troops into the presence of the enemy with every prospect of signalising the place by a glorious victory. A council of war was held, which forbade the engagement in spite of Marlborough's most earnest entreaties, and compelled him in consequence to fall back on Branheim, to protect Louvain and Brussels. The indignation of the English general at this unworthy treatment, and at the universal selfishness of the Allied powers, exhaled in bitter terms in his private correspondence.*

14. Which causes the campaign to be wasted in useless manœuvres.

The consequence of this determination on the part of the Dutch field-deputies to prevent the undertaking of any serious operation, was, that the whole summer passed away in a species of armed truce, or a series of manœuvres too insignificant to entitle them to the name of a campaign. Vendôme, who commanded the French, though at the head of a gallant army above eighty thousand strong, had too much respect for his formidable antagonist to hazard any offensive operations, or run the risk of a pitched battle, unless in defence of his own territory. On the other hand, Marlborough, harassed by the incessant opposition of the Dutch deputies, and yet not strong enough to undertake any operation of

* "I cannot venture unless I am certain of success; for the inclinations in Holland are so strong for peace, that, if we had the least disadvantage, it would make them act very extravagant. I must own every country we have to do with acts, in my opinion, so contrary to the general good, that *it makes me quite weary of serving.* The Emperor is in the wrong in almost every thing he does."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, June 27, 1707; COXE, iii. 261.

importance without the support of their troops, was reduced to merely nominal or defensive efforts. The secret of this ruinous system, which was at the time the subject of loud complaints, and appeared wholly inexplicable, is now fully revealed by the published despatches. The Dutch were absolutely set on getting an accession of territory, and a strong line of barrier towns to be set apart for them out of the *Austrian* Netherlands; and as the Emperor, not unnaturally, objected to being thus shorn of his territories, as the return for his efforts in favour of European independence, they resolved to thwart all the measures of the Allied generals, in the hope that, in the end, they would in this manner prevail in their demands with the Allied cabinets.*

15. Disasters of the Allies in Spain and on the Rhine.

It was not, however, in the Low Countries alone that the selfish views and jealousies of the Allies prevented any operation of importance from being undertaken, and blasted all the fair prospects which the brilliant victories of the preceding campaign had afforded. In Spain, the Allies had suffered a fearful reverse by the battle of

* *Dispatches*, iii. 142-207.—So much were the Dutch alienated from the common cause at this time, and set on acquisitions of their own, that they beheld with undisguised satisfaction the battle of Almanza, and the other disasters in Spain, as likely to render the Emperor more tractable in considering their proceedings in Flanders. "The States," says Marlborough, "received the news of this fatal stroke with less concern than I expected. This blow has made so little impression in the great towns in this country, that the *generality of the people have shown satisfaction at it rather than otherwise*, which I attribute mainly to the aversion to the present government." — *Marlborough to Godolphin*, May 13, 1707. Coxe, iii. 204.

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Almanza, which in a manner ruined the Austrian prospects in the Peninsula, and rendered some operation indispensable, to relieve the pressure experienced in that quarter. Peterborough, whose great military abilities had hitherto sustained, nearly alone, their sinking cause in Spain, had been deprived of his command in Catalonia, from that absurd jealousy of foreigners which in every age has formed so marked a feature in the Spanish character. His successor, Lord Galway, was far from possessing his military abilities; and every thing presaged that, unless a great effort was immediately made, the crown of Spain, the prize for which all contended in the war, would be lost to the Allied powers. Nor was the aspect of affairs more promising on the Rhine. The Margrave of Baden had died there; and his army, before a successor could be appointed, sustained a signal defeat at Stodhoffen. This disaster having opened the gates of Germany, Marshal Villars, at the head of a powerful French army, burst into the Palatinate, which he ravaged with fire and sword. To complete the catalogue of disasters, the disputes between the King of Sweden and the Emperor were again renewed, and conducted with such acrimony, that it required all the weight and address of Marlborough to prevent a rupture between these powers, which would have been attended with the most fatal consequences.

16. Marlborough in consequence strongly urges an invasion of the south of France.

Surrounded by so many difficulties, Marlborough wisely judged that the most pressing danger was that in Spain, and that the first thing to be done was to stop the progress of the Bourbon armies in that quarter.

As the forces in the Peninsula afforded no hopes of effecting that object, he conceived, with reason, that the only way to make an effectual diversion in that quarter was to take advantage of the superiority the Allies had enjoyed in Piedmont, since the decisive victory of Turin in the preceding year, and to threaten Provence with a serious irruption. For this purpose, Marlborough no sooner heard of the disasters in Spain, than he urged in the strongest manner upon the Allied courts to push Prince Eugene with his victorious army across the Maritime Alps, and lay siege to Toulon. Such an offensive movement, which might be powerfully aided by the English fleet in the Mediterranean, would at once remove the war from the Italian plains, fix it in the south of France, and lead to the recall of a considerable part of the French forces now employed beyond the Pyrenees.

17. Selfish conduct of Austria, which ruins the expedition.

But though the reasons for this expedition were thus pressing, and Marlborough's project afforded the only feasible prospect of bringing affairs round in the Peninsula, yet the usual jealousies of the coalesced powers, the moment it was proposed, opposed insurmountable objections to its being carried into effect with the force adequate to ensure its success. It was objected to the siege of Toulon, that it was a maritime operation, of value to England alone: the Emperor insisted on the Allied forces being exclusively employed in the reduction of the fortresses yet remaining in the hands of the French in the Milanese; while Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, between whom

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and the Imperialists the most violent jealousy had arisen, threatened to withdraw altogether from the alliance, unless Eugene's army was directed to the protection and consolidation of his dominions. The real object of the Emperor, in throwing such obstacles in the way of these operations, was, that he had ambitious designs of his own on Naples, and he had, to facilitate their accomplishment, concluded a secret convention with Louis for a sort of neutrality in Italy, which enabled that monarch to direct the forces employed, or destined to be employed there, to the Spanish peninsula. Marlborough's energetic representations, however, at length prevailed over all these difficulties; and the reduction of the Milanese having been completed, the Emperor, in the end of June, consented to Prince Eugene invading Provence, at the head of thirty-five thousand men.* But twelve thousand men, which the Emperor had at his disposal in Italy, were, despite the utmost remonstrances of Marlborough and Eugene, withheld from the Toulon expedition, in order to being employed in the reduction of Naples; a dispersion of forces worse than useless, since, as Bolingbroke justly observes, if Toulon fell, Naples could not have held out a month, while by attacking both at the same time the force directed against each was so weakened as to render success more than doubtful.†

The invasion of the territory of the Grand Monarque accordingly took place, and was supported by a powerful

* Coxe, iii. 196-205.

† Bolingbroke's *State of Parties*. *Works*, iii. 42.

English squadron, which, as Eugene's army advanced into Provence by the Col di Tende, kept the sea-coast in a constant state of alarm. No resistance, as Marlborough had predicted, was attempted; and the Allies, almost without firing a shot, arrived at the heights of Vilate, in the neighbourhood of Toulon, on the 27th July. Had Eugene been aware of the real condition of the defences, and the insubordination which prevailed in the garrison, he might, without difficulty, have made himself master of this important fortress. But from ignorance of these propitious circumstances, he deemed it necessary to commence operations against it in form; and the time occupied in the necessary preparations for a siege proved fatal to the enterprise. The French made extraordinary efforts to bring troops to the menaced point; and, amongst other reinforcements, thirteen battalions and nine squadrons were detached from Vendôme's army in the Netherlands.

18. Invasion of Provence by Eugene, 27th July.

No sooner did Marlborough hear of this detachment, than he concentrated his forces, and made a forward movement to bring Vendôme to battle, to which the Dutch deputies had at length consented; but that general, after some skilful marches and countermarches, retired to an intrenched camp under the guns of Lille, of such strength as to bid defiance to every attack for the remainder of the campaign. Meanwhile the troops, converging towards Toulon, having formed a respectable array in his rear, Eugene was under the necessity of raising the siege, and he retired, as he had entered the country, by the Col di Tende, having first embarked

19. Failure there and retreat of Eugene.

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his heavy artillery and stores on board the English fleet. But though the expedition thus failed in its ostensible object, it fully succeeded in its real one, which was to effect a diversion in the south of France, and relieve the pressure on the Spanish peninsula, by giving the armies of Louis employment in the defence of their own territory.

20. Marlborough closes the campaign and returns to England, 7th November.

Marlborough led his army into winter quarters in the end of October, and Vendôme did the same; the weather being so thoroughly broken as to render it impossible to keep the field. He repaired first to Frankfort, where he met the Elector of Hanover, and then to the Hague, where he exerted himself to inspire a better feeling in the Dutch government, and to get Eugene appointed to the supreme command in Spain: a project which afforded the only feasible prospect of retrieving affairs in the Peninsula, and which, if adopted, might have changed the fate and ultimate issue of the war. Neither the Emperor nor the court of Madrid, however, would consent to this arrangement; the former, because he feared to lose that great general in Italy, the latter, because they feared to gain him in Spain. Marlborough, meanwhile, embarked for England on the 7th November, where his presence had now become indispensably necessary for arresting the progress of public discontent, fanned as it was by court and parliamentary intrigues, and threatening to prove immediately fatal to his own influence and ascendency, as well as the best interests of England.

The origin of these intrigues are to be found not

21. Causes of the reaction against Marlborough and the war at this time.

merely in the asperity of party feeling, which at that time, owing to the recent Revolution, prevailed to a degree never before paralleled in English history, and the peculiar obloquy to which Marlborough was exposed, owing to the part he had taken in that transaction, but to other causes of a general nature, which, more or less in every age, have exercised an important influence in English history. Notwithstanding the powerful elements of popular administration which from the earliest times have been at work in this country, the English are at bottom a loyal and orderly people. Fidelity to their sovereigns is linked in their minds with obedience to their God; their prayers rarely cease to be at once for their *king* and country. It was a rare combination of circumstances which, for a brief space during the reign of Charles I., brought the sacred names of king and parliament into collision; and the universal grief which followed the death of that unhappy monarch, the transports of joy which attended the Restoration, showed how deep were the foundations of loyalty in the English heart. The tyrannical conduct of James II., and his undisguised attempt to re-establish the Romish faith in his dominions, had for a time united all parties against him, and made them all feel the necessity of his expulsion. But when the deed was done, and the danger was removed—when the monarch was in exile, and a new dynasty on the throne, the minds of men began to return to their original dispositions. Old feelings revived, former associations regained their sway, time softened animosities, misfortune

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banished fear, and many who had been foremost in the dethronement of the former monarch, in secret mourned over their triumph, now that he was in exile and distress.*

22. Change in the system of government by the revolution.

In addition to these generous and therefore honourable feelings, there were others springing more immediately from the selfish affections, but the influence of which was not, on that account, the less likely to be in the long run powerful in their operation. It never had been intended, at least by the great body of those who united in bringing about the Revolution, to make any change either in the structure or administration of the government. What they designed was to restore and secure the government, ecclesiastical and civil, on its old and true foundations. "Whatever might happen," says Bolingbroke, "to the King, there was no room to suspect any change in the constitution." † But with whatever intentions it may be set about, no established government can be overturned, without inducing a very great alteration in the subsequent administration of public affairs. The new dynasty rests not merely on a different party, but different principles from the old one: new passions are awakened, new interests created, new classes brought into political power. This was immediately felt on the Revolution. The principle of the former government had been *loyalty;* that being destroyed, the principle of the new one was *interest.* To attach men to the new order of things by the strong bond of

* BOLINGBROKE'S *State of Parties. Works*, iii. 123, 124.

† *Ibid.*

individual ambition became the great object of administration; and this was accomplished in a way, and to an extent, which ere long excited the most serious alarm through the country.

23. Vast increase of loans, taxes, and corruption.

William brought with him from Holland, where experience had long made them known, a perfect acquaintance with the principles on which, in republican states, the influential classes are to be attached to the government. He was aware that self-interest is all-powerful in the long run with mankind; that, in republican states, money, as the sole power, is omnipotent. He knew also the wonderful, and, except to the Dutch, then unknown influence of industry in creating capital as well as the power of the borrowing system in eliciting it. On these two foundations the new government was built up. Extensive and costly wars were undertaken, both to uphold the new dynasty and to maintain the balance of power in Europe. The ambition of Louis XIV., and his atrocious persecution of the Protestant religion, served at once to furnish too good a ground for these contests, and to inflame the national feelings to carry them on. But in their prosecution, the great change made by the Revolution was immediately seen. Loans to an immense extent were contracted every year; the national debt, which had been £664,000 at the Revolution, was already nearly £50,000,000 sterling. The taxes annually raised had increased from £2,000,000, their extent when James was dethroned, to above £5,000,000. This prodigious increase not only formed a material addition to the public burdens, but inspired

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the most dismal apprehensions as to the ultimate, and, as it was then thought, not remote absorption of the whole property of the nation into the hands of the public creditors. Men could see no hope of salvation under a system which had augmented the national debt *eighty fold* in twenty years. The large addition which these loans brought to the national resources had given the government a vast increase of patronage, of which they made an unsparing use, for securing their influence in the constituencies, and maintaining a majority in the House of Commons. Every office, from the premiership to the lowest excise appointment, was bestowed as the reward of political support, and could be obtained in no other way; and to such extent was actual corruption carried on in the constituencies, that the public mind was generally debauched, and patriots of all parties mourned in secret over the unbounded deluge of selfishness which had overspread the nation since the Revolution.*

24. Decline of Marlborough's influence at court, and rise of Mrs Masham.

In addition to these powerful causes of general discontent, which were all visited on Marlborough's head as an important agent in bringing about the Revolution, and the visible and acknowledged head of the war party, there were others in operation, which, at all times and in all courts, but especially under a female reign, are likely to produce important public results. During Marlborough's absence from court, in the command of the armies in Flanders, his influence with the Queen had sensibly declined, and that of another had materially increased. Queen Anne had become alienated from her

* BOLINGBROKE *On Parties. Works*, iii. 294-297.

former favourite, the Duchess of Marlborough, and, what is very remarkable, in consequence of the growing ascendency of a person recommended by the duchess herself. Worn out with the incessant fatigue of attendance on the royal person, the duchess had recommended a poor relative of her own, named Abigail Hill, to relieve her of part of that laborious duty. This young lady, who possessed considerable talents, and a strong relish for intrigue and elevation, had been educated in High Church and Tory principles, and she had not been long about the royal person before she began to acquire an influence over the Queen, who, like most of the sovereigns raised to a throne by a successful revolution, was in secret attached to those monarchical principles which they never desire to see in abeyance, except when it is for their own elevation. Harley, whose ambition and spirit of intrigue were at least equal to her own, was not slow in perceiving the new source of influence thus opened up in the royal household, and a close alliance was soon established between them. These matters are not beneath the dignity of history; they are the secret springs on which its most important changes sometimes depend. Abigail Hill soon after bestowed her hand on Mr Masham, who had also been placed in the Queen's household by the duchess, and, under the name of MRS MASHAM, became the principal instrument in Marlborough's fall, and the main cause of the fruit of the glorious victories of the English general being lost by the treaty of Utrecht.

Though the ascendency of Mrs Masham, and the

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25. Her great influence.

treacherous part she was playing to her benefactress, had long been evident to others, yet the Duchess of Marlborough unaccountably continued blind to it. Her marriage, however, opened the eyes of the duchess; and soon after the promotion of Davies and Blackhall, both avowed Tories, and not free from the imputation of Jacobitism, to the Episcopal bench, in opposition to the recommendation of Marlborough and Godolphin, gave convincing proof that their influence at court, in the disposal even of the highest offices, had been supplanted by that of the new favourite. The consequences were highly prejudicial to Marlborough. The Whigs, who were not fully aware of this secret influence, who had long distrusted him on account of his former connexion with James II., and envied him on account of his great services to the country, and the reputation he had so long enjoyed at court, now joined the Tories in bitter enmity against him. He was charged with protracting the war for his own private purposes; and the man who had refused the government of the Netherlands, and £60,000 a-year, lest his acceptance should breed jealousies in the alliance, was accused of checking the career of victory from sordid motives connected with the profits of the war. His brother Churchill was prosecuted by Halifax and the Whigs on the charge of neglect of duty; and the intercession of the Duke, though made in humble terms, was not so much as even honoured with a reply. The consequences of this decline of court favour were soon apparent: recruits and supplies were forwarded to the army with a very scanty hand — the

military plans and proposals of the Duke were either overruled or subjected to a rigid and often inimical examination — and that division of responsibility and weakening of power became apparent, which is so often in military, as well as political transactions, the forerunner of disaster.

26. Violence of the party contests in England.

Matters were in this untoward state, when Marlborough, in the middle of November, returned from the Hague to London. The failure before Toulon, the disasters in Spain, the nullity of the campaign in Flanders, were made the subject of unbounded outcry in the country; and the most acrimonious debates took place in Parliament, in the course of which violent reproaches were thrown on Marlborough, and all his great services to his country seemed to be forgotten. Matters even went so far, that it was seriously proposed to draft fifteen thousand men from Flanders to reinforce the armies in the Peninsula, although it might easily be foreseen that the only effect of this would be to drive the Dutch to a separate peace, and lose the whole of Brabant, wrested at such an expense of blood and treasure from the French arms. The session of Parliament was one incessant scene of vehement contention; but at length the secret league of Harley with Mrs Masham and the Tories became so apparent, that all his colleagues refused to attend a cabinet council to which he was summoned, and he was obliged to retire. This decisive step restored confidence between Marlborough and the Whigs, and for a time re-established his influence in the government; but Mrs Masham's sway over the Queen

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was not so easily subverted, and, in the end, it proved fatal both to his fortune and the career of glory he had opened to his country.

27. Marlborough's measures defeat a threatened invasion of Scotland by the Pretender.

Desirous of retaliating upon England the insult which the Allied armies had inflicted upon France by the invasion of Provence, Louis XIV. now made serious preparations for the invasion of Great Britain, with the avowed object of re-establishing the Chevalier of St George, the heir of James II., on the throne from which that unhappy monarch had been expelled. Under Marlborough's able direction, to whom, as commander-in-chief, the defensive measures were intrusted, every thing was soon put in a train to avert the threatened danger. Scotland was the scene where an outbreak was to be apprehended, and all the disposable forces of the empire, including ten battalions brought over from Flanders, were quickly sent to that country. The *habeas corpus* act was suspended. Edinburgh Castle was strongly garrisoned, and the British squadron so skilfully disposed in the North Seas, that when the Chevalier with a French squadron put to sea, he was so closely watched, that after vainly attempting to land, both in the Firth of Forth and the neighbourhood of Inverness, he was obliged to return to Dunkirk. This auspicious event entirely restored Marlborough's credit with the nation, and dispelled every remnant of suspicion with which the Whigs regarded him in relation to the exiled family; and though his influence with the court was secretly undermined, his power, to outward appearance, was unbounded. He resumed in consequence the command

of the army in the beginning of April 1708, with authority as paramount as he had enjoyed on any former occasion.

28. Vigorous preparations made by Louis XIV. for the campaign in the Low Countries.

Every thing announced a more important campaign than the preceding had proved in the Low Countries. Encouraged by the little progress which the Allies had made in the former campaign, Louis XIV. had been induced to make the most vigorous efforts to accumulate a preponderating force, and re-establish his affairs in that quarter. Vendôme's army had, by great exertion, been raised to a hundred thousand men, and at the same time secret communications were opened with a considerable portion of the inhabitants in some of the frontier fortresses of Brabant, in order to induce them, on the first favourable opportunity, to surrender their strongholds to the French arms. The unpopularity of the Dutch authorities in those towns, and the open pretensions which they put forth of wresting them from the Emperor, and delivering them over at a general peace to the hated rule of Protestant Holland, rendered those advances peculiarly acceptable. Vendôme's instructions were to act on the offensive, though in a cautious manner; to push forward in order to take advantage of these favourable dispositions, and endeavour to regain the important ground which had been lost during the panic that had followed the battle of Ramilies.

29. Preparations and forces of the Allies in Flanders.

On their side the Allies had not been idle; and preparations had been made for transferring the weight of the contest to the Low Countries. The war in Italy being in a manner terminated by the entire expulsion

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of the French from that peninsula, and by the secret convention for a sort of suspension of active operations in that quarter, Prince Eugene had been brought to the theatre of real hostilities on the northern frontier of France. It was agreed between Marlborough and the Prince that two great armies should be formed, one in Brabant under the former, and the other on the Moselle under the latter; that the Elector of Hanover should act on the defensive on the Rhine; that Eugene should join the English general, and that with their united force they should force the French general to a battle. This well-conceived plan having met with the usual resistance on the part of the Allied powers, Marlborough was compelled to repair in person to Hanover, to smooth over the objections of its Elector. Meanwhile the dissensions and difficulties of the cabinet in London increased to such a degree, that he had scarcely quitted England when he was urged by Godolphin, and the majority of his own party, to return, as the only means of saving them from shipwreck. Marlborough, however, with that patriotic spirit which ever distinguished him, and not less than his splendid abilities formed so honourable a feature in his character, refused to leave the seat of war, and left his political friends to shift for themselves as they best could. Having obtained a promise from Eugene that he would meet him before the month expired, he joined the army at Ghent on the 9th May, 1708, and on the same day reviewed the British division stationed in that city.

An event soon occurred which showed how wide-

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30. Vendôme's movements to aid a revolt in Antwerp.

spread were the intrigues of the French in the Flemish towns, and how insecure was the foundation on which the authority of the Allies rested there. An accidental circumstance led to the discovery of a letter put into the post-office of Ghent, containing the whole particulars of a plan for admitting the French troops into the citadel of Antwerp. Vendôme at the same time made a forward movement to take advantage of these attempts; but Marlborough was on his guard, and both frustrated the intended rising in Antwerp, and barred the way against the attempted advance of the French army. Disconcerted by the failure of this enterprise, Vendôme moved to Soignies at the head of an hundred thousand men, where he halted at the distance of three leagues from the Allied armies. A great and decisive action was confidently expected in both armies; as, although Marlborough could not muster above eighty thousand combatants, it was well known he would not decline a battle, although he was not as yet sufficiently strong to assume the offensive. Vendôme, however, declined attacking the Allies where they stood, and, filing to the right to Braine-le-Leude, close to the field of Waterloo, again halted in a position threatening at once both Louvain and Brussels. Moving parallel to him, but still keeping on the defensive, Marlborough retired to Anderleet. No sooner had he arrived there, than intelligence was received of a farther movement to the right on the part of the French general, which indicated an intention to make Louvain the object of attack. Without losing an instant, Marlborough marched on that

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very night with the utmost expedition, amidst torrents of rain, to Parc, where he established himself in a position, covering that fortress, of such strength, that Vendôme, finding himself anticipated in his movements, fell back to Braine-le-Leude without firing a shot.*

31. Continued procrastination of the German powers.

Though Marlborough, however, had in this manner foiled the movement of the French general, he was not in a condition to undertake offensive operations until the arrival of Eugene's army from the Moselle would raise his force nearer to an equality with the preponderating masses of the enemy, headed as these were by so able a general as Vendôme. The usual delays, however, of the German powers, long prevented this object being attained. For about a month Marlborough was on this account retained in a state of forced inactivity, during which period he bitterly complained, "that the slowness of the German powers was such as to threaten the worst consequences." At length, however, the pressing representations of the English general, seconded by the earnest entreaties of Prince Eugene, overcame the tardiness of the German Electors, and the army of the Moselle began its march towards Brabant. But the Prince was too far distant to bring up his troops to the theatre of active operations before decisive events had taken place; and, fortunately for the glory of England, to Marlborough alone and to his army belongs the honour of one of the most decisive victories recorded in its annals.

Encouraged by his superiority of numbers, and the

* *Marlborough's Dispatches*, iv. 49.

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assurances of support he received from the malecontents in the Flemish towns, Vendôme, who was an able and enterprising general, put in execution, in the beginning of July, a design which he had long meditated for the purpose of expelling the Allies from Brabant. This was by a sudden irruption to make himself master of Ghent, with several of the citizens of which he had established a secret correspondence. This city commanded the course of the Scheldt and the Lys, and lay in the very centre of Marlborough's water communications; and as the fortifications of Oudenarde were in a very dilapidated state, it was reasonable to suppose that its reduction would speedily follow. The capture of these fortresses would at once break up Marlborough's communications, and sever the connecting link between Flanders and Brabant, so as to compel the English army to fall back to Antwerp and the line of the Scheldt, and thus deprive them of the whole fruits of the victory of Ramilies. Such was the able and well-conceived design of the French general, which promised the most brilliant results; and which, against a general less wary and able than Marlborough, would unquestionably have obtained them.

32. Vendôme's able plan to aid a rising in Ghent and Bruges.

Vendôme executed the first part of this design with vigour and success. On the evening of the 4th of July he suddenly broke up from Braine-le-Leude, and marching rapidly all night, advanced towards Halle and Tubise, despatching, at the same time, parties towards such towns in that quarter as had maintained a correspondence with him. One of these parties, by the con-

33. He makes himself master of Ghent and Bruges.

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nivance of the watch, by whom they were admitted within the gates without firing a shot, made itself master of Ghent. At the same time Bruges was surrendered to another party under the Count de la Motte; the small but important fort of Plassendael was carried by storm, and a detachment sent to recover Ghent found the gates shut by the inhabitants, who had now openly joined the enemy, and invested the Allied garrison in the citadel. Marlborough no sooner heard of this movement than he followed with his army; but he arrived in the neighbourhood of Tubise in time only to witness the passage of the enemy over the Senne, near that place. Giving orders to his troops to prepare for battle, he put himself in motion at one next morning, intending to bring the enemy to an immediate action. The activity of Vendôme, however, baffled his design. He made his men, weary as they were, march all night and cross the Dender at several points, breaking down the bridges between Alort and Oerdegun, and the Allies only arrived in time to make three hundred prisoners from the rearguard.

34. Marlborough's activity secures Oudenarde against a *coup-de-main*.

Scarcely had they recovered from this disappointment, when intelligence arrived of the surprise of Ghent and Bruges; while, at the same time, the ferment in Brussels, owing to the near approach of the French to that capital, became so great, that there was every reason to apprehend a similar disaster, from the disaffection of some of its inhabitants. The most serious apprehensions also were entertained for Oudenarde, the garrison being feeble, and the works dilapidated. Marl-

borough's measures at this crisis were prompt and decided. He despatched instant orders to Lord Chandos, who commanded at Ath, to collect all the detachments he could from the garrisons in the neighbourhood, and throw himself into that fortress; and with such diligence were these orders executed, that Oudenarde was secured against a *coup-de-main* before the French outposts appeared before it. Vendôme, however, felt himself strong enough to undertake its siege in form. He drew his army round it; the investment was completed on the evening of the 9th, and a train of heavy artillery was ordered from Tournay to commence the siege,* while he himself, with the covering army, took post in a strong camp at Lessines, on the river Dender.

35. Extreme vexation and serious illness of Marlborough.

Such was the chagrin experienced by Marlborough at these untoward events, that he was thrown into a fever, the result of fatigue, watching, and anxiety. He was particularly disheartened by the loss of Ghent and Bruges, as they lay in the very centre of his water communications, on which he mainly relied for getting up his provisions and military stores. His physician earnestly counselled him to leave the camp, and retire to Brussels, as the only means of arresting his distemper; but nothing could induce him to abandon his post at such a crisis. He continued in his tent accordingly, and the orders were issued by Marshal Overkirk. He was greatly relieved on the 7th, by the arrival of Prince Eugene, who, finding his troops could not come up in time, had left his cavalry at Maestricht, and hastened in

* *Disp.* iv. 95–101. Coxe, iv. 128–131.

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person, though without any followers but his private suite, to take a part in the approaching conflict. Great was the joy of Marlborough on learning the arrival of so illustrious a general: not a feeling of jealousy crossed the breast of either of these great men. His first words to Eugene were—"I am not without hopes of congratulating your Highness on a great victory; for my troops will be animated by the presence of so distinguished a commander." Eugene warmly approved the resolution he had taken of instantly attacking the enemy: and a council of war having been summoned, their united opinion prevailed over the objections of the Dutch deputies, who were less obstinate in resisting vigorous measures than usual, from having become seriously alarmed for their barrier. It was resolved to attack the enemy in their position in front of OUDENARDE.*

36. Marlborough's cross march on Vendôme's communications, 9th July.

The plan resolved on for this purpose by Marlborough and Eugene was as able as its execution was felicitous. Instead of moving direct on the covering army of Vendôme, which lay between them and Oudenarde, they resolved to throw themselves on his communications, and, by interposing between him and the French frontier, compel him to fight with his face towards Paris and his back to Antwerp. It was precisely a repetition of what Marlborough had already done in the campaign of 1705, when the results which would have arisen from such a plan were frustrated by the Dutch deputies.† Every thing here depended on activity and rapidity of move-

* *Disp.* iv. 79–102. COXE, iv. 130–132.

† *Ante*, chap. iii. sec. 21.

ment, and these were not awanting. The Allies broke up at two in the morning of the 9th July, and advanced, in four great columns, towards the French frontiers at Lessines. So rapid and well ordered was the march, that before noon the heads of the columns had reached Herfilingen, fourteen miles from Asche, whence they had started. Bridges were rapidly thrown over the Dender, and it was crossed early on the following morning in presence of Eugene and Marlborough, whom the animation of the great events in progress had, in a manner, raised from the bed of sickness.* Here the Duke halted, and the troops encamped in their order of march, with their right on the Dender and their front covered by a small stream which falls into that river. By this bold and rapid movement, Vendôme's well concerted plan was entirely disconcerted: Marlborough had thrown himself between the French and their own frontier; he had rendered himself master of their communications; and, instead of seeking merely to cover his own fortresses, his measures threatened to compel the enemy to fall back, in order to regain the connexion with their own country, and to abandon the whole

* "The treachery of Ghent, continual marching, and some letters I have received from England, (from the Queen and the Duchess,) have so vexed me, that I was yesterday in so great a fever, that the doctor would have persuaded me to have gone to Brussels; but I thank God I am now better, and by the next post I hope to answer your letters. The States have used this country so ill, that I noways doubt but all the towns in it will play us the same trick as Ghent if they have the power."— *Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 9, 1708. COXE, iv. 38.

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enterprise, which they had commenced with such prospects of success.

37. Vendôme moves off, followed by the Allies, 11th July.

Vendôme was extremely disconcerted at this able movement, and immediately ordered his troops to fall back upon Gavre, situated on the Scheldt below Oudenarde, where he had resolved to cross that river. No sooner was this design made manifest, than Marlborough followed with all his forces, with the double design of raising the investment of Oudenarde, and, if possible, forcing the enemy to give battle, under the disadvantage of doing so in a retreat. Anxious to improve their advantage, the Allied generals marched with the utmost expedition, hoping to come up with the enemy when their columns and baggage were close upon the Scheldt, or at least while they were in the very act of crossing that river. Colonel Cadogan, with a strong advanced guard, was pushed forward by daybreak on the 11th towards the Scheldt, which he reached by eleven. Having immediately thrown bridges over it, he crossed with the whole cavalry and twelve battalions of foot. This body advanced to the summit of the plateau on the left bank of the river, and formed in battle array, the infantry opposite Eynes, the cavalry extending on the left towards Schaerken. Advancing slowly on in this regular array down the course of the river on its left bank, Cadogan was not long of coming in sight of the French rearguard under Biron, with which he had some sharp skirmishing. Meanwhile, Marlborough and Eugene were pressing the passage at the bridges with all imaginable activity; but the greater

part of their army had not yet got across. The main body was still half a league from the Scheldt, and the huge clouds of dust which arose from the passage of the artillery and carriages in that direction, inspired Vendôme with the hope that he might cut off the advanced guard which was over the Scheldt, before the bulk of the Allied forces could get across to their relief. With this view he halted his troops, and drew them up hastily in order of battle. This brought on the great and glorious action which followed, towards the due understanding of which, a description of the theatre of combat is indispensable.*

38. Description of the field of battle.

"At the distance of a mile north of Oudenarde is the village of Eynes. Here the ground rises into a species of low but spacious amphitheatre. From thence it sweeps along a small plain, till it nearly reaches the glacis of Oudenarde, where it terminates in the village of Bevere. To the west the slope ascends to another broad hill called the Bosercanter; and at the highest point of the eminence stands a windmill, shaded by a lofty lime-tree, forming conspicuous objects from the whole adjacent country. From thence the ground gradually declines towards Mardlen; and the eye, glancing over the humid valley watered by the Norken, rests on another range of uplands, which, gently sinking, at length terminates near Asper. Within this space two small streams, descending from the lower part of the hill of Oycke, embrace a low tongue of land, the centre of which rises to a gentle elevation. The borders of

* Coxe, iv. 130–133. Kausler, 713.

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these rivulets are crossed by frequent enclosures, surrounding the farm-yards of Barwaen, Chobon, and Diepenbeck. Near the source of one of these streams is a castellated mansion; at that of the other is the hamlet of Rhetelhouk, embosomed in a wooded nook. These streams unite at the hamlet of Schaerken, and their united current flows in a marshy bed to the Scheldt, which it reaches near Eynes. The Norken, another river traversing the field, runs for a considerable distance parallel to the Scheldt, until, passing by Asper, it terminates in a stagnant canal, which joins the Scheldt below Gavre. Its borders, like those of the other streams, are skirted with coppice-wood thickets; behind are the enclosures surrounding the little plain. Generally speaking, this part of Flanders is even not merely of picturesque beauty and high cultivation, but great military strength; and it is hard to say whether its numerous streams, hanging banks and umbrageous woods, add most to its interest in the eye of a painter, or to its intricacy and defensive character in warlike operations."*

39. Preliminary movements on both sides, and capture of the French advanced guard.

As fast as the Allies got across the Scheldt, Marlborough formed them along the high grounds stretching from Bevere to Mooreghem Mill, with their right resting on the Scheldt. Vendôme's men extended across the plain, from the hill of Asper on the left, to Warreghem on the right. A considerable body of cavalry and

* The above description of the field of Oudenarde is mainly taken from COXE, iv. 134, 135; but the author, from personal inspection of the field, can attest its accuracy.

infantry lay in front of their position in Eynes, of which they had retained possession after repulsing Cadogan's horse. No sooner had the English general got a sufficient number of troops up, than he ordered that gallant officer to advance and retake the village. The infantry attacked in front, crossing the rivulet near Eynes; while the horse, making a circuit higher up, descended on the enemy's rear, while the conflict was warmly going on in front. The consequence was, that the village was carried with great loss to the enemy: three entire battalions were surrounded and made prisoners; and eight squadrons were cut to pieces in striving to make their way across the steep and tangled banks of the Norken. This sharp blow convinced the French leaders that a general action was unavoidable; and though, from the vigour with which it had been struck, there remained little hope of overpowering the Allied advanced guard before the main body came up, yet they resolved, contrary to the opinion of Vendôme, who had become seriously alarmed, to persist in the attack, and risk all on the issue of a general engagement.*

40. Forces on both sides, and commencement of the battle.

It was four in the afternoon when the French commenced the action in good earnest. The forces of the contending parties were nearly equal, with a slight superiority on the part of the French; they had 85,000, Marlborough 80,000 men.† The Duke of Burgundy,

* Coxe, iv. 140–145. Kausler, 713.

† The forces stood as follows:—

Allies.	Men.	French.	Men.
Battalions, 112 / Squadrons, 180	80,000	Battalions, 121 / Squadrons, 198	85,000

—Kausler, 712.

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who had a joint command with Vendôme, ordered General Grimaldi to lead Sistern's squadron across the Norken, apparently with the view of feeling his way preparatory to a general attack. That general set out to do so; but when, after passing the Norken, and arriving on the margin of the rivulet of Diepenbeck, he saw the Prussian cavalry already formed on the other side, he fell back to the small plain near the mill of Royeghem. Vendôme, meanwhile, directed his left to advance, deeming that the most favourable side for an attack; but the Duke of Burgundy, who nominally had the supreme command, and who was jealous of Vendôme's reputation, countermanded this order; alleging that an impassable morass separated the two armies in that quarter. These contradictory orders produced indecision in the French lines, and Marlborough, divining its cause, instantly took advantage of it. Judging with reason that the real attack of the enemy would be made on his left by their right, on his own left wing, in front of the castle of Bevere, he ordered up the twelve battalions of foot under Cadogan from Heurne and Eynes, which they occupied, to reinforce the left. In the meantime he placed a strong guard on the bridges of the Norken, and disposed musketeers in the woods on its sides. Marlborough himself, at the head of the Prussian horse, advanced by Heurne, and took post on the right flank of the little plain of Diepenbeck, where it was evident that the heat of the action would ensue. A reserve of twenty British battalions, with a few guns, was stationed under Argyle near Schaerken, which proved of the most essen-

tial service in the ensuing struggle. Few pieces of artillery were brought up on either side; the rapidity of the movements on both having outstripped the slow pace at which those ponderous implements of destruction were then conveyed.*

41. Brilliant success of the French right.

Hardly were these defensive arrangements completed, when the tempest was upon them. The whole French right wing, consisting of thirty battalions, embracing the French and Swiss guards, and the flower of their army, debouched from the woods and hedges near Groenvelde, and attacking four battalions stationed there, quickly compelled them to retreat. Advancing then in the open plain by echelon, the right in front, along the downward bed of the Norken, they followed up their advantage with the utmost vigour. The action ran like a running fire along the course of this stream; the French constantly pressing on and outflanking the Allies, till they completely turned their left, and made themselves masters of the hamlets of Barwaen and Barlancy. Their advance entirely uncovered the Allied left. Already the cries of victory were heard in the French right, which advanced in good order through the tangled and broken ground around those villages, with a rapid and well-sustained fire issuing from its ranks. This success exposed the Allies to imminent danger; for in their rear was the Scheldt, flowing lazily in a deep and impassable current, through marshy meadows, crossed only by a few bridges, over which

* *Marlborough to Count Piper*, 15th July, 1708.—*Disp.* iv. 115. COXE, iv. 144, 145. KAUSLER, 713.

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retreat would be impossible in presence of a victorious enemy; and the defeat already sustained by the left, exposed them to the danger of being cut off from the friendly ramparts of Oudenarde, their only resource in that direction.*

42. Operations of Eugene on the right.

This alarming success of the French attracted the immediate attention of the vigilant English general. He instantly hastened in person to the scene of danger on the left, where the Dutch and Hanoverians were, despatching Eugene to take the command on the right, where the British troops, whose valour the Prince had often observed and praised, were posted. Marlborough then directed Count Lottnow, with his twenty battalions, to extend his right to support Eugene; so that the Imperial general had now sixty battalions under his orders, while Marlborough had only twenty left. This reinforcement came up just in time; for the Prince was at first assailed by such superior numbers that he was well-nigh overwhelmed. Cadogan's men, under his orders, had been driven, after a stout resistance, out of the wooded coverts which they occupied near Herlelem, and were retiring somewhat in disorder over the plain in its front. Reinforced, however, by the twenty battalions under Lottnow, Eugene again advanced in good order, and broke the first line of the enemy. General Natzmer, at the head of the Prussian cuirassiers, took advantage of their disorder, and charged headlong through the second line of the enemy's left, so as to reach the little plain near the chapel of Royeghem. But here their career

* KAUSLER, 714. COXE, iv. 140–145.

was stopped by a line of the French horse guards in reserve, while a dreadful fire of musketry streamed out of every hedgerow and copse with which the plain was environed. Half his men were speedily stretched on the plain; the remainder recoiled in disorder, and Natzmer himself with difficulty escaped, by leaping over a broad ditch, while the French household troops were thundering in pursuit. *

43. And of Marlborough on the left.

While Eugene was thus combating with various success on the right, Marlborough had a more arduous conflict to maintain on the left. Placing himself at the head of the Dutch and Hanoverian battalions, which were with difficulty maintaining their ground against the advancing line and increasing vehemence of the enemy, the English general led them again to the attack. But it is no easy matter to make the French recede from the enthusiasm of victory to the hesitation which precedes defeat. They opposed a most desperate resistance to this onset. The ground on which the hostile lines met was so broken, that the battle in that quarter turned almost into a series of partial conflicts, and even personal encounters. Every bridge, every ditch, every wood, every hamlet, every enclosure, was obstinately contested; and so incessant was the roll of musketry, and so intermingled did the hostile lines become, that the field, seen from a distance, appeared an unbroken line of fire. If the resistance, however, was obstinate, the attack was no less vigorous; and at length the enthusiastic ardour of the French yielded to the steady valour of the Germans. Gradually

* Coxe, iv. 146, 147. Kausler, 717, 718.

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they were driven back, literally at the bayonet's point; and at length, recoiling at every point, they yielded all the ground they had won at the commencement of the action.*

44. Decisive movement by Marlborough against the French left.

Barlancy and Barwaen were soon regained, but not without the most desperate resistance; for not only did the enemy obstinately contest every field and enclosure, but, in their fury, they set fire to such of the houses as could no longer be maintained. Despite all these obstacles, however, the English general fairly drove them back, at the musket's point, from one enclosure to another, till they reached the hamlet of Diepenbeck, where the resistance proved so violent that he was compelled to pause. His vigilant eye, however, ere long observed, that the hill of Oycke, which flanked the enemy's extreme right, was unoccupied. Conceiving that their right might be turned by this eminence, he directed Overkirk, with the reserve cavalry, and twenty Dutch and Danish battalions, to occupy it. The veteran general executed this important, and, as it proved, decisive movement with his wonted alacrity and spirit. The wooded dells round the castle of Bevere soon rang with musketry; the enemy, forced out of them, were driven over the shoulder of the Bosercanter; which being soon passed, the mill of Oycke, and the plateau behind it, were immediately occupied by the Danish and Dutch battalions.†

Arrived on the summit, Overkirk made his men bring up their left shoulders, so as to wheel inwards, and form

* Coxe, iv. 146, 147. Kausler, 718.

† Kausler, 715. Coxe, iv. 146, 147.

a vast semicircle round the right wing of the French, which, far advanced beyond the centre, was now thrown back, and grouped into the little plain of Diepenbeck. Observing the effect of this movement, Marlborough directed Overkirk to press forward his left still farther, so as to seize the passes of Mullem and mill of Royeghem, by which the communication between the enemy's right and centre was maintained. This order was executed with vigour and success by the Prince of Orange and General Oxenstiern. The progress of the extreme Allied left round the rear of the French right, was observed by the frequent flashes of their musketry on the heights above Mullem, to which they began to descend, driving the enemy before them with loud cheers, which re-echoed over the whole field of battle. The victory was now gained. Refluent from all quarters, enveloped on every side, the whole French right was hurled together, in wild confusion, into the plain of Diepenbeck; where seven regiments of horse, which made a noble effort to stem the flood of disaster, were all cut to pieces or taken.

45. Vigour with which it was executed by Overkirk, who entirely turns them.

Seeing his right wing on the verge of destruction, Vendôme made a gallant effort to rescue it. Dismounting from his horse, he led the infantry of his left near Mullem, to the aid of their devoted comrades. But the thick and frequent enclosures broke their array; the soldiers were dismayed by the loud shouts of victory from their right; and when they emerged from the enclosures, and approached the plain of Diepenbeck, the firm countenance of the British horse,

46. Gallant but ineffectual efforts of Vendôme to arrest the disorder.

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drawn up on its edge, and the sturdy array of their infantry under Eugene, which advanced to meet them, rendered the effort abortive. Meanwhile darkness set in, though the battle still raged on all sides. The frequent flashes of the musketry on the heights around, intermingled with the shouts of the victors, showed but too clearly how nearly the extremity of danger was approaching to the whole French army. So completely were they enveloped, that the advanced guard of the right under Eugene, and the left under the Prince of Orange, met on the heights in the French rear, when they exchanged several volleys, and it was only after great exertions had been made by the respective commanders, that their error was discovered, and a stop was put to such useless butchery. To prevent a repetition of such disasters, orders were given to the whole troops to halt where they stood; and to this precaution many owed their safety, as it was impossible in the darkness to distinguish friend from foe. But it enabled great part of the centre and left of the French to escape unobserved, which, had daylight continued for two hours longer, would have been all taken or destroyed. Their gallant right was left to its fate; while Eugene, by directing the drums of his regiments to beat the French *assemblée*, made great numbers of their left and centre prisoners. Some thousands of the right, by slipping unobserved to the westward, near the castle of Bevere, made their way in a confused body, in the interval between the Allied left and centre, towards France, but the greater part of that wing were

killed or taken. Vendôme, with characteristic presence of mind, formed a rearguard of a few battalions and twenty-five squadrons, with which he covered the retreat of the centre and left; but the remainder of those parts of the army fell into total confusion, and fled headlong in wild disorder towards Ghent.*

47. Results of the battle.

We have the authority of Marlborough for the assertion, that, "if he had had two hours more of daylight, the French army would have been irretrievably routed, great part of it killed or taken, and the war terminated on that day."† As it was, the effects of the blow which had been struck were prodigious, and entirely altered the character and fate of the campaign. The French lost six thousand men in killed and wounded, besides nine thousand prisoners, and one hundred standards wrested from them in fair fight. The Allies were weakened by five thousand men; for the French were superior in number, and fought well, having been defeated solely by the superior generalship of the Allied commanders.‡

48. Pursuit of the enemy, and arrival of reinforcements on both sides.

No sooner did daylight appear than forty squadrons were detached towards Ghent, in pursuit of the enemy; while Marlborough himself, with characteristic humanity, visited the field of battle, doing his utmost to assuage

* Coxe, iv. 146–151. *Marlborough to Count Piper*, 16th July, 1708.—*Disp.* iv. 115. *Duke of Berwick's Mem.* ii. 12.

† *Marlborough à M. De Themgue*, 15th July, 1708. — *Disp.* iv. 111.

‡ *Disp.* iv. 111. Berwick himself states the prisoners at 9000.—Marlborough, ii. 12. *Marlborough to the Duchess*, July 16, 1708. —Coxe, iv. 157.

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the sufferings, and provide for the cure of the numerous wounded, alike friend and foe, who encumbered its bloody expanse. Count Lottnow was sent with thirty battalions and fifty squadrons to possess himself of the lines which the enemy had constructed between Ypres and Warneton, which that officer did with vigour and success, making five hundred prisoners. This was the more fortunate, as, at the moment they were taken, the Duke of Berwick, with the French army from the Moselle, was hastening up, and had exhorted the garrison to defend the lines to the last extremity. At the same time the corresponding Allied army, commanded by Eugene, arrived at Brussels, so that both sides were largely reinforced. Berwick's corps, which consisted of thirty-four battalions and fifty-five squadrons, was so considerable, that it raised Vendôme's army again to an hundred thousand men. With this imposing mass that able general took post in a camp which he strongly fortified, situated behind the canal of Bruges, in the vicinity of Ghent, and commanding the navigation both of the Scheldt and the Lys. He rightly judged that, as long as he was there at the head of such a force, the Allies would not venture to advance into France; though it lay entirely open to their incursions, Marlborough being between him and Paris.*

Encouraged by this singular posture of the armies, Marlborough strongly urged upon the Allied council of war the propriety of relinquishing all lesser objects,

* *Marlborough to Lord Godolphin*, July 16 and 19, 1708.—Coxe, iv. 158 159.

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Marlborough's advice to march to Paris is overruled, and it is resolved to lay siege to Lille.

passing the whole fortified towns on the frontier, and advancing straight towards the French capital.* This bold counsel, however — which, if acted on, was precisely what Wellington and Blucher did a century after, in advancing from the same country, and would have been perhaps attended with similar success — was rejected. Eugene, and the remainder of the council, considered the design too hazardous, while Vendôme with so great an army lay intrenched in their rear and threatening their communications. It was resolved, therefore, to commence the invasion of the territory of the Grand Monarque, by the siege of the great frontier fortress of LILLE, the strongest and most important place in French Flanders, and the possession of which would give the Allies a solid footing in the enemy's territory. This, however, was a most formidable undertaking; for not only was the place itself of great strength, but the citadel within its walls was still stronger, and it was garrisoned by Marshal Boufflers, one of the ablest officers in the French service, with fifteen thousand choice troops, and every requisite for a vigorous defence. On the other hand, Vendôme, at the head of an hundred thousand men, lay in an impreg-

* Conscious of the panic which prevailed in France, and aware that some brilliant enterprise was requisite to prevent the Dutch from listening to separate overtures for peace, Marlborough proposed to meet at Lille, and penetrate by the northern frontier into the heart of France. An expedition fitted out in England was to co-operate on the coast. But the design of penetrating direct into France seemed too bold even to Eugene, and, of course, encountered strong opposition from a government so timid and vacillating as that of Holland. —COXE, iv. 165.

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nable camp between Ghent and Bruges, ready to interrupt or raise the siege; and his position there hampered Marlborough extremely in bringing forward the requisite equipage for so great an undertaking, by interrupting the whole water navigation of the country, which was the only practicable mode of conveyance, for the dragging it up by land would require sixteen thousand horses. Nevertheless it was resolved to undertake the enterprise, sanguine hopes being entertained that, rather than see so important a fortress fall, Vendôme would leave his intrenched camp, and give the Allies an opportunity of bringing him again to battle on equal terms.*

50. Preparations of the Allies for the siege.

No sooner was the undertaking resolved on, than the most vigorous measures were adopted to carry it into execution. The obstacles which presented themselves, however, were great indeed, and proved even more formidable than had been at first anticipated. Every gun, every waggon, every round of ammunition, required to be transported almost all the way by land carriage from Holland; and Brussels, the nearest depôt for ordinary and military stores for the Allies, was situated twenty-five leagues off. Then was felt in its full force the immense loss sustained by the Allies in the interruption of the water communications of the army by the capture of Ghent and Bruges. Sixteen thousand horses were requisite to transport the train which brought these stores, partly from Maestricht, partly from Holland; and when in a line of march it stretched over fifteen miles.

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, July 23, 1708. COXE, iv. 165.

Prince Eugene, with fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons, covered the vast moving mass—Marlborough himself being ready, at a moment's notice, in his camp near Menin, to support him, if necessary. Between these two great men there existed then, as ever, the most entire cordiality.* Their measures were all taken in concord, and with such ability, that though Vendôme with an hundred thousand men lay on the flank of the line of march, which extended over above seventy miles, not a gun was taken, nor a carriage lost; and the whole arrived in safety on the 12th of August at the camp at Helchin, whither Marlborough had gone to meet it. So marvellous were the arrangements made for the safe conduct of this important convoy, and so entire their success, that they excited the admiration of the French, and in no slight degree augmented the alarm of their generals, who had hitherto treated the idea of Lille being besieged with perfect derision. "Posterity," says the French annalist, Feuqueres, "will scarcely believe the fact, though it is an undoubted truth. Never was a great enterprise conducted with more skill and circumspection."†

Prince Eugene was intrusted with the conduct of the

* "I need not tell you how much I desire the nation may be at last eased of a burdensome war, by an honourable peace; and no one can judge better than yourself of the sincerity of my wishes to enjoy a little retirement at a place you have contributed in a great measure to make so desirable. I thank you for your good wishes to myself on this occasion. *I dare say, Prince Eugene and I shall never differ about our laurels.*"—*Marlborough to Mr Travers*, July 30, 1708.

† Coxe, iv. 216-219.

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51. Commencement of the siege, and position of the covering army, 13th August.

siege, while Marlborough commanded the covering army. The Prince commenced the investment of the place on the 13th August, while Marlborough remained at Helchin, taking measures for the protection of the convoys, which were incessantly coming up from Brussels. At length the whole, eighty-one, arrived in safety in the camp before Lille, amounting to one hundred and twenty heavy guns, forty mortars, twenty howitzers, and four hundred ammunition waggons. Eugene's army for the siege consisted of fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons, in all about forty thousand men. Marlborough's covering force was sixty-nine battalions and one hundred and forty squadrons, numbering nearly sixty thousand men. But the force of the French was still more considerable in the field. Vendôme and Berwick united on the 30th, on the plain between Grammont and Lessines, and on the 2d September advanced towards Lille with one hundred and forty battalions and two hundred and fifty squadrons, mustering one hundred thousand combatants, besides twenty thousand left, under Count de la Motte, to cover Ghent and Bruges. But Marlborough had no fears for the result, and ardently longed for a general action, which he hoped would one way or other conclude the war. "If we have a second action," says he, "and God blesses our just cause, this, in all likelihood, will be our last campaign; for I think they would not venture a battle, but are resolved to submit to any condition, if the success be on our side; and if they get the better, they will think themselves masters; so that, if there should be an action, it is like

to be the last this war. If God continues on our side, we have nothing to fear, our troops being good, though not so numerous as theirs. I dare say, before half the troops have fought, success will declare, I trust in God, on our side; and then I may have what I earnestly wish for quick."*

52. Marlborough arrests Vendôme and Berwick when trying to raise the siege.

No sooner was Marlborough informed of the junction of Vendôme and Berwick, than, anticipating the direction they would follow, and the point at which they would endeavour to penetrate through to raise the siege, he marched parallel to the enemy, and arrived on the 4th September at a position previously selected, having his right at Noyelle, and his left at Peronne. So correctly had he divined the designs of the able generals to whom he was opposed, that, within two hours after he had taken up his ground, the united French army appeared in his front. Notwithstanding their great superiority of forces, the enemy, however, did not venture to attack, and the two armies remained watching each other for the next fortnight, without any movement being attempted on either side.† Meanwhile, Eugene was actively prosecuting the siege of Lille. Trenches were opened on the 22d, and a heavy fire was opened from eighty pieces of cannon. On the following night, an outwork, called the Chapel of St Magdalene, was stormed and taken. The second parallel was soon completed, and some farther outworks carried; and the whole battering guns having at length been mounted, a

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, August 30, 1708. COXE, iv. 222.

† *Disp.* iv. 241-260.

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breach was effected in the salient angle of one of the horn-works, and on the same night a lodgment was effected. A vigorous sortie, on the 10th September, hardly retarded the progress of the operations, and a sap was made under the covered way. Marlborough, however, who visited the besiegers' lines on the 18th, expressed some displeasure at the slow progress of the siege; and another assault was in consequence hazarded on the 20th September.

53. Progress of the siege, and Eugene wounded, which throws the direction of the siege on Marlborough.

This assault was most obstinately resisted; but at length the assailants overcame all opposition, and bursting in, carried a demi-bastion and several adjoining works, though with a loss of two thousand men. Great as this loss was, it was rendered more severe in consequence of the temporary loss of one officer who fell; for Eugene himself, transported with ardour, had taken part in the assault, and was seriously wounded. This grievous casualty not only gave the utmost distress to Marlborough, but immensely augmented his labours; for it threw upon him at once the direction of the siege and the command of the covering army. Every morning at break of day he was on horseback reconnoitring Vendôme's army; and if all was quiet in front, he rode to the lines and directed the siege in person till evening, when he again returned to the camp of the covering force. By thus in a manner doubling himself, this great man succeeded in preventing any serious inconvenience being experienced even from so great a catastrophe as Eugene's wound; and he infused such vigour into the operations of the siege, that, on the 23d September,

great part of the tenaillons and a large portion of the covered way were broken through. At the same time the ammunition of the garrison began to fail so much, in consequence of the constant fire they had kept up for above a month, that Marshal Boufflers sent intimation to Vendôme, that unless a supply of that necessary article was speedily obtained, he would be obliged to surrender.*

54. Efforts on both sides to obtain supplies of ammunition.

The French generals, aware how much the fortress was straitened, were meanwhile straining every nerve to raise the siege; but such was the terror inspired by Marlborough's presence, and the skill with which his defensive measures were taken, that they did not venture to hazard an attack on the covering army. A well-conceived project of Vendôme's, however, for throwing a supply of powder into the fortress, in part succeeded. Many of the horsemen engaged in this attempt were cut off, but some succeeded in making their way in through the Allied lines; and their success, and the stores which they had brought, raised the spirits of the garrison, and prolonged their means of defence. But meanwhile the ammunition of the besiegers was also falling short; and as the enemy, since the concentration of Marlborough's army in front of Vendôme, had become completely masters of the communication with Brussels, no resource remained but to get it up from Ostend. A convoy was accordingly formed there by General Erle, which set out on the 27th September, and consisted of

* *Disp.* iv. 260-271. *Marlborough to Godolphin*, September 24, 1708. Coxe, iv. 243.

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seven hundred waggons, escorted by General Webb and ten thousand men. Count de la Motte instantly set out with the troops under his command from the vicinity of Ghent, and came up with the convoy in the defile of Wynandals, when a sharp action ensued. The French advanced to the attack with their wonted impetuosity; but Webb's defensive arrangements were so skilful, and the fire kept up by his troops so vigorous, that the enemy were utterly routed; and the convoy, forcing its way through the enemy's forces, reached Menin on the following day, and then, amidst the acclamations of the whole army, reached the Allied camp on the 30th of September.*

55. Capitulation of the town of Lille, 22d October.

The safe arrival of these supplies gave new energy to the besiegers; while the recovery of Eugene relieved Marlborough of half the labour under which, to use his own words, he had been for a fortnight "rather dead than alive." Three days afterwards the whole tenaillon was carried, and the troops were established directly opposite the breaches of the ramparts. Meanwhile Vendôme opened the sluices, and inundated the country to the very borders of the dyke, so as to intercept Marlborough's communication with Ostend, and prevent the arrival of stores from it. But the English general defeated this device by bringing the stores up in flat-bottomed boats from Ostend to Leffinghen, and thence conveying them in carriages, mounted on very high wheels, to the camp. Cadogan greatly distinguished himself in this difficult service. At this critical juncture

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, October 1, 1708. Coxe, iv. 254.

General Overkirk died, to the great regret of Marlborough, who could then ill spare such an ardent and patriotic spirit. Meanwhile, however, the siege continued to advance; and fifty-five heavy guns thundered from the counterscarp on the breaches, while thirty-six mortars swept all the works which commanded them. Finding himself unable to withstand the assault which was now hourly expected, Boufflers, on the 22d October, beat a parley, and capitulated; having sustained, with unparalleled resolution, a siege of sixty days, of which thirty were with open trenches. Eugene was filled with admiration at his gallant defence, and therefore granted the French general and his brave garrison the most honourable terms. The gates were surrendered on the 23d, and the remainder of the garrison, still five thousand strong, retired into the citadel,* where they prolonged their defence for six weeks more.

56. Siege of the citadel of Lille and diversion of Vendôme against Brussels.

The fall of the external walls of Lille did not terminate the struggle for that important fortress. Marshal Boufflers still held the citadel, a stronghold in itself equal to most fortresses of the first order. No sooner, however, were the Allies in possession of the town than the attack on the citadel commenced with all the vigour which the exhausted state of the magazines would permit. Detached parties were sent into France, which, by levying contributions to a great extent, not only replenished the stores of the Allies, but depressed the spirits of the French, by making them feel, in a manner not to be

* *Disp.* iv. 271. *Marlborough to Godolphin*, October 24, 1708. Coxe, iv. 263, 264.

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misunderstood, that the war had at length approached their own doors. To divert, if possible, Marlborough from his enterprise, the Elector of Bavaria, who had recently returned from the Rhine, was detached by Vendôme, with fifteen thousand men, against Brussels; while he himself remained in his intrenched camp on the Scheldt, barring the road from Lille to that city, so as to stop the communication, and be ready to profit by any advantage afforded by the measures which the English general might make for its relief. The governor of Brussels, M. Paschal, who had seven thousand men under his orders, rejected the summons to surrender, and prepared for a vigorous defence; and meanwhile Marlborough prepared for its relief, by one of those brilliant strokes which, in so peculiar a manner, characterise his campaigns.

57. Marlborough's brilliant march, which defeats it.

Giving out that he was going to separate his army into winter-quarters, he despatched the field-artillery towards Menin, and he himself set out with his staff in rather an ostentatious manner for Courtray. But no sooner had he lulled the vigilance of the enemy by these steps, than, wheeling suddenly round, he advanced with the bulk of his forces towards the Scheldt, and directed them against that part of the French general's lines where he knew them to be weakest. The army, upon seeing these movements, anticipated on the following day the bloodiest battle they had yet had during the war. But the skill of the English general rendered resistance hopeless, and gained his object with wonderfully little loss. The passage of the river was rapidly effected at three

points; and the French corps stationed at Oudenarde were vigorously assailed and driven back on Grammont, with the loss of twelve hundred men, so as to leave the road uncovered, and the communication with Brussels unimpeded. Having thus cleared the way, Marlborough sent back Eugene to resume the siege of the citadel of Lille; while he himself, with the greater part of his forces, proceeded on to Brussels, which he entered in triumph on the 29th November. The Elector of Bavaria was too happy to escape, leaving his guns and wounded behind; and the citadel of Lille at length, despairing of succour, capitulated on the 11th December. Thus was this memorable campaign terminated by the capture of the strongest frontier fortress of France, under the eyes of its best general and most powerful army.*

58. Marlborough recovers Ghent, 2d Jan. 1709.

But Marlborough, like Cæsar, deemed nothing done while any thing remained to do. *Nihil actum credens, dum quid superesset agendum.* Though his troops were exhausted by marching and fighting almost without intermission for five months, and he himself was labouring under severe illness in consequence of his fatigues, he resolved in the depth of winter to make an attempt for the recovery of Ghent, the loss of which in the early part of the campaign had been the subject of such deep mortification. The enemy, after the citadel of Lille capitulated, had naturally broken up their army into cantonments, under the belief that the campaign was concluded; but Marlborough suddenly collected his

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle*, 17th December, 1708. *Disp.* iv. 362.

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forces, and drew round Ghent on the 18th December. Eugene formed the covering force with the corps lately employed in the reduction of Lille. The garrison was very strong, consisting of no less than thirty battalions and nineteen squadrons, mustering eighteeen thousand combatants.* The governor had been instructed by Vendôme to defend this important stronghold to the last extremity; but he was inadequately supplied with provisions and forage, and the result signally belied the expectations formed of his resistance. The approaches were vigorously pushed. On the 24th the trenches were opened; on the 25th a sortie was repulsed; on the 28th December, the fire began with great vigour from the breaching and mortar batteries; and at noon the governor sent a flag of truce, offering to capitulate if not relieved before the 2d January. This was agreed to; and on the latter day, as no friendly force approached, the garrison opened their gates and marched out, in such strength that they were defiling incessantly from ten in the morning till seven at night!†

59. And Bruges, concludes the campaign, and again refuses the Government of the Netherlands.

Bruges immediately followed this example; the garrison capitulated, and the town again hoisted the Austrian flag. The minor forts of Plassendael and Leffinghen were immediately evacuated by the enemy. With such expedition were these important operations conducted, that before Vendôme could even assemble a

* *Disp.* iv. 315–323–345. *Marlborough to Duke de Mole,* 10th December, 1708. *Ibid.* 346. COXE, iv. 278.

† *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle,* 3d January, 1709. *Disp.* iv. 389.

force adequate to interrupt the besiegers' operations, both towns were taken, and the French were entirely dispossessed of all the important strongholds they had gained in the early part of the campaign in the heart of Brabant. Having closed his labours with these glorious successes, Marlborough put the army into winter quarters, now rendered secure, on the Flemish frontiers, and himself repaired to the Hague to resume his usual contest with the timidity and selfishness of the Dutch Allies. Thus had Marlborough the glory, in one campaign, of defeating in a pitched battle the best general and most powerful army possessed by France, and capturing its strongest frontier fortress, the masterpiece of Vauban, under the eyes of one hundred and twenty thousand men assembled from all quarters for its relief. He put the keystone at the same time into this arch of glory, by again declining the magnificent offer of the government of the Low Countries, with its appointment of sixty thousand a-year for life, a second time pressed upon him by King Charles, from an apprehension that such an offer might give umbrage to the government of Holland, or excite jealousy in the Queen's government at home.*

Such was the memorable campaign of 1708—one of the most glorious in the military annals of England, and the one in which the extraordinary capacity of the

* "You will find me, my Prince, always ready to renew the patent for the government of the Low Countries, formerly sent to you, and to extend *it for your life.*"—*King Charles to Marlborough*, August 8, 1708. Coxe, iv. 245.

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British general perhaps shone forth with the brightest lustre. The vigour and talent of Vendôme, joined to the secret communication which he had with those disaffected to the Austrian government in Ghent and Bruges, procured for him, in the commencement of the campaign, a great, and what, if opposed by less ability, might have proved a decisive advantage. By the acquisition of these towns, he gained the immense advantage of obtaining the entire command of the water communication of Brabant, and establishing himself in a solid manner in the heart of the enemy's territory. The entire expulsion of the Allies from Austrian Flanders seemed the unavoidable result of such a success, by so enterprising a general at the head of a hundred thousand combatants. But Marlborough was not discouraged; on the contrary, he built on the enemy's early successes a course of manœuvres, which in the end wrested all his conquests from him, and inflicted a series of disasters greater than could possibly have been anticipated from a campaign of unbroken success.

60. Glorious results of the campaign, and great ability of Marlborough.

Boldly assuming the lead, he struck such a blow at Oudenarde as resounded from one end of Europe to the other, infused a terror into the enemy from which they never recovered during the remainder of the campaign, paralysed Vendôme in the midst of his success, and reduced him from a vigorous offensive to a painful defensive struggle. While the cabinet of Versailles were dreaming of expelling the Allies from Flanders, and detaching Holland, partly by intrigue, partly by force of arms, from the coalition, he boldly entered the territory

61. His bold offensive measures, and extraordinary capture of Lille.

of the Grand Monarque, laid siege to his chief frontier fortress, and captured it in sight of his greatest army commanded by his best general. In vain was the water communication of the Netherlands interrupted by the enemy's possession of Ghent and Bruges; with incredible activity he got together, and with matchless skill conducted to the besiegers' lines before Lille, a huge convoy fifteen miles long, drawn by sixteen thousand horses, in the very teeth of Vendôme at the head of an hundred and twenty thousand men. Lille captured, Ghent and Bruges recovered, the Allied standards solidly planted on the walls of the strongest fortress of France, terminated a campaign in which the British, overmatched and surrounded by lukewarm or disaffected friends, had well-nigh lost at the outset by foreign treachery all the fruits of the victory of Ramilies.

CHAPTER V.

CONFERENCES OF GERBRUYDENBERG — LOUIS REFUSES THE ULTIMATUM OF THE ALLIES — SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF TOURNAY — BATTLE OF MALPLAQUET — FALL OF MONS.

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1. Marlborough's renewed difficulties with the Allied courts.

THE glorious termination of this campaign, and, above all, the addition made to the immediate security of Holland, by the recovery of Ghent and Bruges, sensibly augmented Marlborough's influence at the Hague, and at length overcame the timidity and vacillation of the Dutch government. When the English general repaired there in the beginning of 1709, he quickly overawed the adherents of France, regained his wonted influence over the mind of the Pensionary Heinsius, and at length succeeded in persuading the government and the States to augment their forces by six thousand men. This, though by no means so great an accession of numbers as was required to meet the vast efforts which France was making, was still a considerable addition; and by the influence of Prince Eugene, who was well aware that the principal effort of the enemy in the next campaign would be made in the Netherlands, he obtained a promise that the Imperial troops should winter there, and be recruited, so as to compensate their losses in the preceding campaign. Great difficulties were experienced with the court of Turin, which had conceived the most

extravagant hopes from the project of an invasion of France on the side both of Lyons and Franche Comté, and for this purpose demanded a large subsidy in money, and the aid of fifty thousand men under Prince Eugene to operate on the Upper Rhine.

2. Extravagant ideas of the cabinets of Berlin and Turin.

Marlborough was well aware, from past experience, of the little reliance to be placed on any military operations in which the Emperor and the Italian powers were to be placed in co-operation. He was therefore far from sanguine of the success of their design; but as it was material to keep the court of Turin in good-humour, he gave the proposal the most respectful attention, and sent General Palmer on a special mission to the Duke of Savoy, to arrange the plan of the proposed irruption into the Lyonnois. With the cabinet of Berlin the difficulties were greater than ever, and in fact had become so urgent, that nothing but the presence of the English general, or an immediate agent from him, could prevent Prussia from seceding altogether from the alliance. General Grumbkow was sent there accordingly in March, and found the king in such ill-humour at the repeated disappointments he had experienced from the Emperor and the Dutch, that he declared he could only spare *three battalions* for the approaching campaign.*

* "'Can I do more than I do now?' said the King. 'I make treaties, but the Emperor breaks his word with me, as well as Holland, every moment. Besides, it is impossible, without great inconvenience, *to give more than three battalions;* and he is a wretch who would advise me otherwise.' I said he was a wretch who should advise him not to do it. He replied, 'You speak very boldly, and may perhaps repent it, if your arguments are not conclusive.'"— *General Grumbkow to Marlborough*, March 9, 1709. COXE, iv. 341.

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By great exertions, however, and the aid of Marlborough's letters and influence, the king was at length prevailed on to continue his present troops in the Low Countries, and to increase them by fourteen squadrons of horse.*

3. His cold reception from the court of England, and mission to the Hague.

But it was not on the Continent only that open enemies or lukewarm and treacherous friends were striving to arrest the course of Marlborough's victories. His difficulties at home, both with his own party and his opponents, were hourly increasing; and it was already foreseen, that they had become so formidable that, at no very remote period, they would cause his fall. Though he was publicly thanked, as well he might, by both houses of parliament, when he came to London on 1st March, 1709, yet he received no mark of favour from the Queen, and was treated with studied coldness at court.† Envy, the inseparable attendant on exalted merit—ingratitude, the usual result of irrequitable services, had completely alienated the Queen from him. Mrs Masham omitted nothing which could alienate her royal mistress from so formidable a rival; and it was hard to say whether she was most cordially aided in her efforts by the open Opposition, or the half Tory-Whigs who formed the administration. Both Godolphin and the Duke speedily found that they were merely tolerated in

* *King of Prussia to Marlborough*, March 9, 1709. COXE, iv. 346.

† In communicating the thanks of the House of Lords, the Chancellor said, "I shall not be thought to exceed my present commission, if, being thus led to contemplate the mighty things which your Grace has done for us, I cannot but conclude with acknowledging, with all gratitude, the providence of God in raising you up to be an instrument of so much good, in so critical a juncture, when it was so much wanted."—COXE, iv. 375.

office: while, in order to weaken their influence with the people, every effort was made to depreciate even the glorious victories which had shed such imperishable lustre over the British arms. Deeply mortified by this ingratitude, Marlborough gladly embraced an offer which was made to him by the government, in order to remove him from court, to conduct the negotiation now pending at the Hague with Louis XIV. for the conclusion of a general peace.*

4. Great concessions offered by Louis.

The pride of the French monarch was now so much humbled that he sent the President Rouilé to Holland, with public instructions to offer terms to the Allies, and private directions to do every thing possible to sow dissension among them, and, if possible, detach Holland from the alliance. His proposals were to give up Spain, the Indies, and the Milanese to King Charles; and cede the Italian islands, reserving Naples and Sicily for his grandson. In the Netherlands and Germany, he offered to restore matters to the state they were at the peace of Ryswick; and though he was very reluctant to give up Lille, he offered to cede Menin in its place. These terms being communicated to the court of London, they returned an answer insisting on the restoration of the whole Spanish monarchy to the house of Austria, the acknowledgment of the title of Queen Anne to the Crown of England, and the Protestant succession, the removal of the Pretender, the destruction of the harbour of Dunkirk, and that an adequate barrier should be secured to the Dutch. In their ideas upon this barrier,

* Coxe, iv. 352-366-377.

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however, they went much beyond what Marlborough was disposed to sanction, and he therefore maintained a prudent reserve on the subject. As the French plenipotentiary could not agree to these terms, Marlborough returned to England, and Lord Townsend was associated with him as plenipotentiary. They were instructed to insist that Furnes, Ypres, Menin, Lille, Tournay, Condé, Valenciennes, and Maubeuge, should be given up to form a barrier, and that Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay should be restored. Alarmed at the exaction of such rigorous terms, Louis sent M. de Torcy, who made large concessions; and Marlborough, who was seriously desirous of bringing the war to a conclusion, exerted all his influence with the States to induce them to accept the barrier offered. He so far succeeded, that on the very day after his return to the Hague, he wrote both to Lord Godolphin and the Duchess of Marlborough, that he had prevailed on the Dutch commissioners to accede to the principal articles, and that he had no doubt the negotiation would terminate in an honourable peace.*

These flattering prospects, however, were soon over-

* "M. De Torcy has offered so much, that I have no doubt it will end in a good peace."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, 19th May, 1707.

"Every thing goes on so well here, that there is no doubt of its ending in a good peace. Government have in readiness the sideboard of plate, and the chairs of state and canopy; and I beg it may be made so as to form part of a bed when I am done with it here, *which I hope may be by the end of this summer*, so that I may enjoy your dear society in quiet, which is the greatest satisfaction I am capable of having." — *Marlborough to the Duchess*, 19th May, 1709. COXE, iv. 393.

5. Vain endeavours of Louis to bribe Marlborough.

cast. The Dutch renewed their demand of having their barrier strengthened *at the expense of Austria*, and insisted that the Flemish fortress of Dendermonde and Ghent, forming part of the *Imperial* dominions, should be included in it. To this both Eugene and Marlborough objected, and the Dutch, in spite, refused to stipulate for the demolition of Dunkirk. So violent an altercation took place on the subject between the Pensionary Heinsius and Marlborough, that it had well-nigh produced a schism in the grand alliance. M. de Torcy at first endeavoured to mitigate the demands of the Dutch government; but finding them altogether immoveable, he addressed himself privately to Marlborough, offering him enormous bribes if he could procure more favourable terms for France. The offers were 2,000,000 livres (£80,000) if he could secure Naples and Sicily, or even Naples alone, for the grandson of the King of France; and 4,000,000 livres (£160,000) if, in addition to this, he could save Strasburg, Dunkirk, and Landau, for France. Marlborough turned away from the disgraceful proposal with coldness and contempt;* but enforced in the most earnest manner on the French king, the prudence and even necessity of yielding to the proffered terms, if he would save his country from dismemberment, and himself from ruin. His efforts, however, to bring matters to an accommodation with France proved ineffectual; and after some weeks spent in proposals and counter-proposals, the

* *Mémoire, M. de. Torcy*, ii. 104–111.

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ultimatum of the Allies was finally delivered to the French plenipotentiary by the Pensionary of Holland.*

6. Ultimatum of the Allies, which is rejected by France.

By this ultimatum, Charles was to be acknowledged King of Spain and the Indies, and the whole Spanish monarchy was to be ceded by France. All the conquests of Louis in the Low Countries were to be given up; the Duke of Anjou was to surrender Spain and Sicily in two months, and if these kingdoms were not then delivered, *Louis was to concur with the Allies for his expulsion.* The barrier towns, so eagerly coveted by the Dutch, were to be given up to them. Namur, Menin, Charleroi, Luxembourg, Conde, Tournay, Maubeuge, Nieuport, Fismes, and Ypres, were to be put into the possession of the Allies. De Torcy objected to the articles regarding the cession of the whole Spanish monarchy in two months; though he declared his willingness to go to Paris, in order to persuade the French monarch to comply with them, and actually set off for that purpose. On the way to the French capital, however, he was met by a messenger from the French king, who rejected the proposals. "If I must continue the war," said Louis, with a spirit worthy of his race, "it is better to contend with my enemies than my own family." So firmly had it been believed, both at the Hague and in London, that peace was not only probable, but actually concluded, that letters of congratulation poured in on the Duke from all quarters, celebrating his dexterity and address in negotiation not less than his prowess in arms. So confident, indeed, was Marlborough that peace would

* SWIFT'S *Conduct of the Allies*, 72. COXE, iv. 395–415.

be concluded, that he was grievously disappointed by the rupture of the negotiations; and never ceased to strive, during the whole summer, to smooth away difficulties, and bring the Allies to such terms as the French king would accept. He was overruled, however, by the ministry at home, who concluded the celebrated barrier treaty with the Dutch, which Marlborough refused to sign, and which was accordingly signed by Townsend alone, without his concurrence! And it is now decisively proved by the publication of his private correspondence with Lord Godolphin, that he disapproved of the severe articles insisted upon by the Allies and his own cabinet; and that if the uncontrolled management of the negotiation had been committed to him, it would have been brought to a favourable issue on terms highly advantageous to England, and which would have prevented the treaty of Utrecht from forming a stain on its annals. *

7. Noble efforts of Louis to save France.

The rigorous terms demanded, however, by the Allied cabinets, and the resolute conduct of the King of France in rejecting them, had an important effect upon the war, and called for more vigorous efforts on the part of the confederates than they had yet put forth, or were even now disposed to make. Louis made a

* "I have as much mistrust for the sincerity of France as any body living can have; but I will own to you, that in my opinion, if France had delivered the towns promised by the plenipotentiaries, and demolished Dunkirk and the other towns mentioned, they must have been at our discretion; so that if they had played tricks, so much the worse for themselves."—*Marlborough to Lord Godolphin*, June 10, 1709. COXE, iv. 405.

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touching appeal to the patriotic spirit of his people, in an eloquent circular which he addressed to the prelates and nobles of his realm. He there set forth the great sacrifices which he had offered to make to secure a general peace; showed how willing he had been to divest himself of all his conquests, and abandon all his dreams of ambition; and concluded by observing, that he was now compelled to continue the contest, because the Allies insisted upon his descending to the humiliation of joining his armies to theirs, for the purpose of dispossessing his own grandson. The appeal was not made in vain to the spirit of a gallant nobility, and the patriotism of a brave people. It kindled a flame of general enthusiasm and loyalty. All ranks and parties vied with each other in contributing their property and personal service for the maintenance of the war; and the campaign which opened under such disastrous auspices, was commenced with a degree of energy and unanimity on the part of the French people which had never hitherto been evinced in the course of the contest.* As afterwards, in the wars of the Revolution, too, the misfortunes of the state tended to the increase of its military forces. The stoppage of commerce, and shock to credit, threw numbers out of employment; and starving multitudes crowded to the frontier, to find that subsistence amidst the dangers of war which they could no longer find in the occupations of peace.†

Skilfully availing themselves of this burst of patriotic

* COXE, iv. 401.

† CAPEFIGUE, *Histoire de Louis XIV.* vi. 42–46.

8. Forces on both sides at the opening of the campaign.

fervour, the ministers of Louis were enabled to open the campaign with greater forces than they had ever collected since the beginning of the war. The principal effort was made in Flanders, where the chief danger was to be apprehended, and the enemy's most powerful army and greatest general were to be faced. Fifty-one battalions and forty-nine squadrons were drawn from the Rhine to Flanders; and this large reinforcement, joined to the crowds of recruits which the public distress impelled to his standards, enabled the renowned Marshal Villars, who had received the command of the French, to take the field at the head of 112,000 men. With this imposing force, he took a position, strong both by nature and art, extending from Douay to the Lye; the right resting on the canal of Douay, the centre covered by the village of La Bassie, the left supported by Bethune and its circumjacent marshes. The whole line was strengthened by redoubts and partial inundations. Never at any former period had France sent such an army into the field; never had she one animated with so enthusiastic and gallant a spirit. The soldiers, equally with the nobles, were aware that this was the last effort for the independence of France. All felt, in the words afterwards used by Napoleon at Waterloo, "that the moment had arrived when it behoved every Frenchman to conquer or die."

Aware of the great augmentation of the enemy's force which was in progress in Flanders, seeing clearly that it was there that the vital point of the contest was to be,

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9. Marlborough's efforts to obtain an augmentation of force in the Low Countries.

and not less convinced of the necessity of reinforcements to stem the progress of disaster in Spain, Marlborough made the most vigorous efforts to obtain, both from the British government and the Allied powers, an increase of forces for carrying on the war. He knew well that the enemy was bringing forth his last reserve; that the *ban* and *arrière-ban* of France was in the field; that this was their final effort; and that victory in this protracted struggle would remain with the party in war, as in a battle, which could throw in a reserve, to which the enemy had nothing at the moment to oppose. By dint of vigorous representations, and by still having the majority of the cabinet and House of Commons on his side, though in a minority at court, he succeeded in obtaining a reinforcement of 10,000 men to the English army; and the supplies voted for the ensuing year reached the unprecedented, and, as it was then thought, enormous amount of £7,000,000 sterling.* But the other powers could not be prevailed on to make any similar additions to their contingents: and so little was the British government aware of the necessity of augmenting the forces at the vital point, that instead of making any addition to their troops in the Netherlands, they proposed to *withdraw* seven regiments from Antwerp, and send them to Spain. Marlborough expressed, as well he might, the utmost uneasiness at this extravagant proposal: a proposal which shows what so many other events in English history demonstrate, how ignorant its

* Coxe, iv. 351.

government in general is of the first principles of military operations.*

But all that he could obtain from the British government was a promise that the seven battalions should be retained in Flanders, and should not be removed at the commencement of the campaign in the Low Countries. At the same time, he made such vigorous representations to the Dutch ministry, of the danger of taking the field with an inferior force, that he succeeded in obtaining a

10. Which at length are partially successful. The forces at his disposal.

* "I received last night the favour of yours of the 7th January, in which you continue of opinion that the seven regiments at Antwerp should be sent to England. I can say no more on that subject. You will see what the enclosed letter says as to the designs of France. As they draw their troops from all parts to strengthen their army in this country, if we, at the same time, are to be obliged to leave our troops where they cannot be of much use, there can be no doubt but at length *my Lord Faversham will be gratified by our being beaten, for so great a superiority will undo us.* I am of your opinion, that one reason for the enemy marching their troops from all parts so early into this country, is in hope they may incline the Dutch to hearken to peace." —*Marlborough to Godolphin*, Brussels, Feb. 7, 1710. COXE, iv. 372. Again, — "I know not what you may reason in England, but I am fully persuaded that it is of the last consequence to have the troops of Wirtemberg, and the seven regiments serve in this country in the next campaign; for with those all the troops that we may be able to get for the sum of money voted by Parliament for the troops of augmentation, will fall very much short of the number of men the enemy will have in this country. Is it possible that men of good sense, and that mean sincerely well to the common cause, can be in the least doubt, that if the enemy make their greatest, indeed their only effort in this country, we must do the same, or expect to be beaten! which I pray Almighty God to avert, for it would be a fatal blow. If any orders have been sent for the march of these seven regiments, I do most earnestly beg you will lay before her Majesty and the Lords of the Cabinet my apprehensions."— *Marlborough to the Lord Treasurer*, Brussels, February 11, 1710. COXE, iv. 372.

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reinforcement of 4,000 Wirtemburghers, in their pay, who were to be drawn from the Rhine. Yet with all this, he was still inferior to the enemy when the campaign commenced; and but for the reinforcements thus tardily yielded to his urgent representations, he would have been so much so, that the campaign, so far from leading to a prosperous result, would in all probability have terminated in nothing but disaster.* At length, however, Marlborough took the field at the head of 110,000 men; and although his force was composed of a heterogeneous mixture of the troops of different nations, yet, like the *colluvies omnium gentium* which followed the standards of Hannibal, it was held together by the firm bond of military success, and inspired with that unbounded confidence which is founded on experience of the resources and capacity of its chief. Events of the greatest and most interesting kind could not but be anticipated, from the contest of two armies of such magnitude, headed by such leaders, and when the patriotic ardour of the French nation, now roused to the uttermost, was matched against the military strength of the confederates, matured by a series of victories so long and brilliant.†

11. Marlborough's measures to deceive Villars.

Though relying with confidence on the skill and intrepidity of his troops, Marlborough, according to his usual system, resolved if possible to circumvent the enemy by manœuvring, so as to reserve his hard blows for the time when success was to be won in no other way. His design was to begin the campaign either with a

* Coxe, iv. 371, 372. † *Ibid.* v. i. 5.

general battle or by the reduction of Tournay, lying on the direct road from Brussels by Mons to Paris, which would break through, in the most important part, the barrier fortresses. To prepare for either event, and divert the enemy's attention, strong demonstrations were made against Villars' intrenched position. If it had been practicable, he would have been attacked; but after a close reconnoitre, both generals deemed it too hazardous an enterprise, and it was resolved to besiege the fortress. On the 23d June, the right under Eugene crossed the lower Dyle below Lille; while the left, with which were the whole English and Dutch contingents, crossed the upper Dyle, and Marlborough fixed his head quarters at the castle of Looz. So threatening were the masses which the Allies now accumulated in his front that Villars never doubted he was about to be attacked; and in consequence he strengthened his position to the utmost of his power, called in all his detachments, and drew considerable reinforcements from the garrisons of Tournay and the other fortresses in his vicinity.

Having thus fixed his antagonist's attention, and concentrated his force in his intrenched lines between Douay and Bethune, Marlborough suddenly moved off to the left, in the direction of Tournay. This was done, however, with every imaginable precaution to impose upon the enemy. The Allied army decamped at nightfall on the 27th in dead silence, and advanced part of the night straight towards the French lines; but at two in the morning, the troops were suddenly halted, wheeled to the left, and marched in two columns, by Pont à

12. And lays siege to Tournay, 27th June.

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Bovines and Pont à Tressins, towards Tournay. So expeditiously was the change in the line of march managed, and so complete the surprise, that by seven in the morning the troops were drawn round Tournay, and the investment complete, while half of the garrison being absent in the lines of Marshal Villars, it was thereby rendered incapable of making any effectual defence. Meanwhile that commander was so deceived, that he was congratulating himself that the enemy had "fixed on the siege of Tournay, which should occupy them the whole remainder of the campaign; when it is evident their design had been, after defeating me, to thunder against Aire la Venant with their heavy artillery, penetrate as far as Boulogne, and after laying all Picardy under contribution, push on even to Paris." *

13. Description of Tournay.

Tournay is an old town, the ancient walls of which are of wide circuit; but it had a series of advanced works erected by Vauban, and its citadel, a regular pentagon, was considered by the great Condé as one of the most perfect specimens of modern fortification in existence. So little did the governor expect their approach, that many of the officers were absent, and a detachment of the garrison, sent out to forage, were made prisoners by General Lumley, who commanded the investing corps. The fortifications, however, were in the best state, and the magazines well stored with ammunition and military stores. It was the ancient capital of the Nervii, so celebrated for their valour in

* *Mém. de Villars*, ii. 63. *Marlborough to Godolphin*, June 27, 1709. Coxe, iv. 5, 6.

the wars with Cæsar; and an inscription on its walls testified that Louis XIV., after taking it in four days, had assisted in the construction of additional works which it was supposed would render it impregnable. The attempt to take such a place with a force no greater than that which Villars had at hand to interrupt the operations, would have been an enterprise of the utmost temerity, and probably terminated in disaster, had it not been for the admirable skill with which the attention of the enemy had been fixed on another quarter; and the siege commenced with one half of its garrison absent, and the other imperfectly supplied with provisions.*

14. Siege and capture of that town, 29th July

The heavy artillery and siege equipage required to be brought up the Scheldt from Ghent, which in the outset occasioned some delay in the operations. Marlborough commanded the attacking, Eugene the covering forces. By the 6th July, however, the approaches were commenced; on the 10th the battering train arrived, and the trenches were armed; repeated sallies of the enemy to interrupt the operations were repulsed, and several of the outworks were carried between that time and the 21st, on which last occasion the besiegers succeeded in establishing themselves in the covered ways. The breaching batteries continued to thunder with terrible effect upon the walls; and on the 27th, a strong horn-work, called the Seven Fountains, was carried, and the Allies were masters of nearly the whole line of

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle*, 27th June, 1709. *Disp.* iv. 520. Coxe, v. 7, 8.

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the counterscarp. Meanwhile, Villars made no serious movement to interrupt the besiegers, contenting himself with making demonstrations between the Scarpe and the Scheldt to alarm the covering forces. Eugene, however, narrowly watched all his proceedings; and in truth the French marshal, far from really intending to disquiet the Allies in their operations, was busied with an immense army of pioneers and labourers in constructing a new set of lines from Douay along the Scarpe to the Scheldt near Condé, in order to arrest their progress in the direction they had now taken. Seeing no prospect of being relieved, the governor on the 29th surrendered the town, and retired with the remains of the garrison, still four thousand strong, into the citadel.*

15. Siege of the citadel, and its desperate chances.

On the surrender of the town, no time was lost in prosecuting operations against the citadel, and the line of circumvallation was traced out that very evening. But this undertaking proved more difficult than had been expected, and several weeks elapsed before any

* *Marlborough to Lord Galway*, 4th July, 1709; and *to the Queen*, 29th July, 1709. *Disp.* iv. 530 and 556. Coxe, v. 8–13. Marlborough's private letters to the Duchess, at this period, as indeed throughout all his campaigns, prove how tired he was of the war, and how ardently he sighed for repose at Blenheim. "The taking of the citadel of Tournay will, I fear, cost us more men and time than that of the town; but that which gives me the greatest prospect for the happiness of being with you, is, that certainly the misery of France increases, which must bring us a peace. The misery of the poor people we see is such, that one must be a brute not to pity them. May you be ever happy, and I enjoy some few years of quiet with you, is what I daily pray for."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, July 30, 1709. Coxe, v. 12.

material progress was made in the operations, during which Villars made good use of his time in completing his new lines to cover Valenciennes and Condé. The garrison of the citadel, though unequal to the defence of the town of Tournay, was quite adequate to that of the citadel; and the vast mines with which the whole outworks and glacis were perforated, rendered the approaches in the highest degree perilous and difficult. The governor, M. De Surville, proposed, on the 5th August, to capitulate in a month if not relieved; and to this proposition Marlborough and Eugene, with praiseworthy humanity, at once agreed: but the King of France refused to ratify the terms proposed, unless the suspension of arms was made general to the whole Netherlands, to which the Allied general would not accede. The military operations consequently went on, and soon acquired a degree of horror hitherto unparalleled even in that long and bloody contest.

16. Alarms of the troops at the subterraneous warfare.

The art of countermining, and of counteracting the danger of mines exploding, was then very imperfectly understood, though that of besieging above ground had been brought to the very highest degree of perfection. The soldiers, in consequence, entertained a great and almost superstitious dread of the perils of that subterraneous warfare, where prowess and courage were alike unavailing, and the bravest, equally with the most pusillanimous, were liable to be at any moment blown into the air, or smothered under ground, by the explosions of an unseen, and therefore appalling enemy. The Allies were inferior in regular sappers and miners to the

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besieged, who were singularly well supplied with that important arm of the service. The ordinary soldiers, how brave soever in the field, evinced a repugnance at engaging in this novel and terrific species of warfare: and it was only by the officers personally visiting the trenches in the very hottest of the fire, and offering high rewards to the soldiers who would enter into the mines, that men could be got to venture on the perilous service.*

17. Its real horrors, August 15-23.

It was not surprising that even the bravest of the Allied troops were appalled at the new and extraordinary dangers which now awaited them, for they were truly of the most formidable description. What rendered them peculiarly so, was, that the perils in a peculiar manner affected the bold and the forward. The first to mount a breach, to effect a lodgment in a horn-work, to penetrate into a mine, was sure to perish. First a hollow rumbling noise was heard, which froze the bravest hearts with horror: a violent rush as of a subterraneous cataract succeeded; and immediately the earth heaved, and whole companies, and even battalions, were destroyed in a frightful explosion. On the 15th August a sally by M. De Surville was bravely repulsed, and the besiegers, pursuing their advantage, effected a lodgment in the outwork: but immediately a mine was sprung, and a hundred and fifty men were blown into the air. In the night between the 16th and 17th, a long and furious conflict took place below ground and in utter darkness, between the contending parties,

* DUMONT'S *Military History*, ii. 104. COXE, v. 15, 16.

which at length terminated to the advantage of the besiegers.* On the 23d a mine was discovered, sixty feet long by twenty broad, which would have blown up a whole battalion of Hanoverian troops placed above it; but while the Allies were in the mine, congratulating themselves on the discovery, a mine below it was suddenly sprung, and all within the upper one were buried in the ruins. On the night of the 25th, three hundred men, posted in a large mine discovered to the Allies by an inhabitant of Tournay, were crushed in a similar manner by the explosion of another mine directly below; and on the same night, one hundred men posted in the town ditch were suddenly buried under a bastion blown out upon them.

Great was the dismay which these dreadful and unheard-of disasters produced among the Allied troops. But at length the resolution and energy of Marlborough and Eugene triumphed over every obstacle. Early on the morning of the 31st August, the white flag was displayed, and a conference took place between the two

18. But the citadel is at length taken, Sept. 3.

* A very striking incident occurred in the siege, which shows to what a height the heroic spirit with which the troops were animated had risen. An officer commanding a detachment, was sent by Lord Albemarle to occupy a certain lunette which had been captured from the enemy; and though it was concealed from the men, the commander told the officer he had every reason to believe the post was undermined, and that the party would be blown up. Knowing this, he proceeded with perfect calmness to the place of his destination; and when provisions and wine were served out to the men, he desired them to fill their calashes, and said, "Here is a health to those who die the death of the brave." The mine was immediately after sprung; but fortunately the explosion failed, and his comrades survived to relate their commander's noble conduct.

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commanders in the house of the Earl of Albemarle; but the governor having refused to accede to the terms demanded — that the garrison should surrender as prisoners of war — the fire recommenced, and a tremendous discharge from all the batteries took place for the next three days. This compelled the brave De Surville to submit; and Marlborough, in consideration of his gallant defence, permitted the garrison to march out with the honours of war, and return to France, on condition of not serving again till they were exchanged. On September 3d the gates were surrendered; and the entire command of this strong fortress and rich city, which entirely covered Spanish Flanders, was gained by the Allies.*

19. Vigorous movements of Marlborough towards Mons.

No sooner was Tournay taken than the Allied generals turned their eyes to Mons, the next great fortress on the road to Paris, and which, with Valenciennes, constituted the only remaining strongholds that lay on that line between them and Paris. So anxious was Marlborough to hasten operations against this important town, that on the very day on which the white flag was displayed from the citadel of Tournay, he despatched Lord Orkney with all the grenadiers of the army, and twenty squadrons, to surprise Ghislain, and secure the passage of the Haine. On the 3d, the Prince of Hesse-Cassel was despatched after him with 4000 foot and sixty squadrons. Lord Orkney, on arriving on the banks of the Haine,

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle*, 31st August and 3d September, 1709. *Disp.* iv. 585–588. COXE, v. 14–18. DUMONT'S *Military History*, ii. 103.

found the passage so strongly guarded that he did not deem it prudent to alarm the enemy by attempting to force it. The Prince of Hesse-Cassel, however, was more fortunate. He marched with such extraordinary diligence, that he got over forty-nine English miles in fifty-six successive hours; a rapidity of advance, for such a distance, that had never been previously surpassed, though it has been outdone in later times.* By this means he reached the Haine on the other side of Mons, and surprised the passage near Obourg, at two in the morning of the 6th, and at noon entered the French lines of the Trouille without opposition, the enemy retiring with precipitation as he advanced. He immediately extended his forces over the valley of the Trouille, fixed his head-quarters at the abbey of Belian, and with his right occupied in strength the important plateau of Jemappes, which intercepted the communication between Mons and Valenciennes. It was on this height that the famous battle was fought with the French Republicans under Dumourier in 1792: another proof, among the many which history affords, how frequently the crisis of war, at long distances of time from each other, takes place in the same vicinity. By this decisive movement, Marlborough gained an immense advantage;—Mons was now passed and *invested on the side of France;* and the formidable lines, thirty leagues in length, on which Marshal Villars had been labouring with such assiduity

* Mackenzie's brigade, which joined Wellington's army after the battle of Talavera, marched sixty-two English miles in twenty-six hours.—NAPIER, ii. 412.

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during the two preceding months, were turned, and made of no avail.*

20. He turns Villars' lines, and gets between them and France.

While the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, with the advanced guard of the army, gained this brilliant success, Marlborough was rapidly following with the main body in the same direction. The force besieging Tournay crossed the Scheldt at the bridge of that town, and joined the covering force under Eugene. From thence they advanced to Sirant, where they were joined by Lord Orkney with his detachment, which had failed in passing the Haine. On the 6th, having learned the success of the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, in turning the enemy's lines, and getting between Mons and France, the Allied generals pushed on with the utmost expedition, and leaving their army to form the investment of Mons, joined the Prince in the abbey of Belian. Both commanders complimented his Royal Highness highly on the advantages he had gained; but he replied, "The French have deprived me of the glory due to such a compliment, since they have not even waited my arrival." In truth, such had been the celerity and skill of his dispositions that they had rendered resistance hopeless, and achieved success without the necessity of striking a blow. Meanwhile Marshal Boufflers, hearing a battle was imminent, arrived in the camp as a volunteer, to serve under Villars, his junior in military service; a noble example of disinterested patriotism, which, not less than the justly popular character of that distinguished general, raised

* COXE, v. 20–25. *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle*, 7th September, 1709. *Disp.* iv. 590.

the enthusiasm of the French soldiers to the very highest pitch.* Every thing announced a more sanguinary and important conflict between the renowned commanders and gallant armies now arrayed on the opposite sides, than had yet taken place since the commencement of the war.†

21. Concentration of the Allied, and Villars' army, 7th Sept.

During those rapid and vigorous movements, which entirely turned and broke through his much-vaunted lines of defence, Villars remained with the great body of his forces in a state of inactivity. Aware that he was to be attacked, but ignorant where the blow was likely to fall first, he judged, and perhaps rightly, that it would be hazardous to weaken his lines at any one point by accumulating forces at another. No sooner, however, did he receive intelligence of the march of the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, than he broke up from the lines of Douay, and hastily collecting his forces, advanced towards that adventurous commander. At two in the morning of the 4th, his cavalry approached the front of the Prince's position; but conceiving the whole Allied army was before him, he did not venture to make an attack at a time when his great superiority of force would have enabled him to do it with every chance of success. The movement of Villars, however, and the general *feu-de-joie* which resounded through the French lines on

*A similar incident occurred in the British service, when Sir Henry, now Lord Hardinge, and Governor-general of India, served as second in command to Sir Hugh Gough, his senior in military rank, but subordinate in station, at the glorious battles of Ferozepore and Sobraon, with the Sikhs. How identical is the noble and heroic spirit in all ages and countries! It forms a freemasonry throughout the world.

† Coxe, v. 24, 25. *Disp.* iv. 588–595.

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the arrival of Marshal Boufflers, warned the Allied leaders that a general battle was at hand; and orders were in consequence given to the whole army to advance at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 7th. A detachment of Eugene's troops was left to watch Mons, the garrison of which consisted only of eleven weak battalions and a regiment of horse, not mustering above five thousand combatants; and the whole remainder of the Allied army, ninety thousand strong, pressed forward in dense masses into the level and marshy plain in the middle of which Mons is situated. They advanced in different columns headed by Marlborough and Eugene; and never was a more magnificent spectacle presented, than when the troops, consisting of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, defiled in the finest order from the woods into the plain, and ascended the undulating ground which lies to the south of that town. They arrived at night, and bivouacked in a line stretching along the heights of Quaregnon, near Genly, to the village of Quevy, about three miles in length, and only five distant from the enemy; so that it was evident that a general battle would take place on the following day, unless Villars was prepared to abandon Mons to its fate.*

22. Composition and strength of the French army.

The French marshal, however, had no intention of declining the combat. His army was entirely fresh, and in the finest order; it had engaged in no previous operations; whereas a bloody siege, and subsequent fatiguing marches in bad weather, had sensibly weakened the strength, though they had not depressed the spirits

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle*, 7th and 11th September, 1709. *Disp.* iv. 591, 592. COXE, v. 25, 26.

of the Allied soldiers. The vast efforts of the French government, joined to the multitude of recruits which the public distress had impelled into the army, had in an extraordinary degree strengthened its ranks. After making provision for all the garrisons and detached posts with which he was charged, Villars could bring into the field no less than one hundred and thirty battalions, and two hundred and sixty squadrons, and all raised to their full complement, mustering sixty-five thousand infantry, and twenty-six thousand horse, with eighty guns; in all, with the artillery, ninety-five thousand combatants. This vast array had the advantages of being almost entirely of one nation, speaking one language, and animated by one spirit; while the Allied force was a motley assemblage of many different races and nations of men, held together only by the strong tie of military success and confidence in their generals. Both armies were of nearly equal strength; they were under the command of the ablest and most intrepid commanders of their day; the soldiers of both had long acted together, and acquired confidence in each other; and each contained that intermixture of the fire of young, with the caution of veteran troops, which affords the happiest augury of military success. It was hard to predict, between such antagonists, to which side the scales of victory would incline.*

* *Mém. de Villars*, ii. 167–184. COXE, v. 26–28.

The relative force of the two armies was as follows :—

Allies.		Men.	French and Bavarians.		Men.
Battalions,	139	93,000	Battalions,	130	95,000
Squadrons,	252		Squadrons,	260	
Guns,	105		Guns,	80	

—KAUSLER, 769.

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23. Description of the field of battle.

The face of the country occupied by the French army, soon to be the theatre of the great battle which was approaching, is an irregular plateau, interspersed by woods, intersected by streams, and elevated from a hundred and fifty to two hundred feet above the meadows of the Trouille. Mons and Bavay, the villages of Quevrain and Giory, formed the angular points of this broken surface. Extensive woods on all the principal eminences gave diversity and beauty to the landscape, and, in a military point of view, added much to the strength of the position as defensible ground against an enemy. Near MALPLAQUET, on the west of the ridge, is a small heath, and immediately to the south of it the ground descends by a rapid slope to the Hon, which finds its way to the Trouille, which it joins near Condé, by a circuitous route in the rear of the French position. The streams from Malplaquet to the northward all flow by a gentle slope through steep wooded banks to the Trouille, into which they fall near Mons. The woods on the plateau are the remains of a great natural forest which had formerly covered the whole of these uplands, and out of which the clearings round the villages and hamlets which now exist, have been cut by the hands of laborious industry. Two woods near the summit level of the ground are of a great extent, and deserve particular notice. The first, called the wood of Louvière, stretches from Longueville in a north-easterly direction to Cauchie; the second, named the wood Taisnière, of still larger size, extends from the Chaussée de Bois to the village of Bouson. Between these woods are two open-

ings, or Trouées, as they are called in the country—the Trouée de la Louvière and the Trouée d'Aulnoet. Generally speaking, the ground occupied by the French, and which was to be the theatre of the battle, may be described as a rough and woody natural barrier, stretching across the high plateau which separates the Haine and the Trouille, and pervious only by the two openings of Louvière and Aulnoet, both of which were in a very great degree susceptible of defence.*

24. Noble force on both sides.

The Allied army consisted of one hundred and thirty-nine battalions, and two hundred and fifty-two squadrons, with one hundred and five guns; mustering ninety-three thousand combatants. The two armies, therefore, were as nearly as possible equal in point of military strength—a slight numerical superiority on the part of the French being compensated by a superiority of twenty-five guns on that of the Allies. Among the French nobles present at the battle, were no less than twelve who were afterwards marshals of France.† The son of James II. under the name of the Chevalier de St George, who combined the graces of youth with the hereditary valour of his race, was there; St Hilaire and Folard, whose works afterwards threw such light on military science, were to be found in its ranks. The Garde-du-corps, Mousquetaires gris, Grenadiers à

* Coxe, v. 29, 30. The author has passed over the ground, and can attest the accuracy of the description here given.

† Viz. Artagnan, Maréchal de Montesquieu; De Guiche, Maréchal de Grammont; Puysegur, Montmorenci, Coigny, Broglio, Chaulnes, Nangis, Isenghien, Duras, Houdancourt, and Sanneterre. The monarchy never sent forth a nobler array.

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cheval, French, Swiss, and Bavarian guards, as well as the Irish brigade, stood among the combatants. The Montmorencies were there, and the De Guichès, the De Grammonts, and De Coignys. The reverses of Louis had called forth the flower of the nobility, as well as the last reserves of the monarchy.*

25. Preparatory movements on both sides, and interference of the Dutch deputies.

Early on the morning of the 9th, Marlborough and Eugene were on the look-out at the Mill of Sart, with a strong escort, consisting of thirty squadrons of horse. From the reports brought in, it was soon ascertained that the whole forces of the French were marching towards the plain of Malplaquet, on the west of the plateau, and that Villars himself was occupying the woods of Lasnière and Taisnière. His head-quarters were at Blaugnies, in the rear of the centre. The two armies were now only a league and a half separate, and Marlborough and Eugene were clear for immediately attacking the enemy, before they could add to the natural strength of their position by intrenchments. But the Dutch deputies, Hooft and Goslinga, interfered, as they had done on a similar occasion between Wavre and Waterloo, and so far modified this resolution as to induce a council of war, summoned on the occasion, to determine not to fight till the troops from Tournay were within reach, and St Ghislain, which commanded a passage over the Haine, was taken. This was done next day, the fort being carried by escalade, and its garrison of two hundred men made prisoners; and on the day following, all the reserves from Tournay came

* Coxe, v. 32. *Mém. de Villars*, ii. 280.

up. But these advantages, which in themselves were not inconsiderable, were dearly purchased by the time which Villars gained for strengthening his position. Instead of pushing on to attack the Allies, as Marlborough and Eugene had expected, in order to raise the siege of Mons, that able commander employed himself with the utmost skill and vigour in throwing up intrenchments in every part of his position.

26. Villars fortifies his position.

The nature of the ground singularly favoured his efforts. The heights he occupied, plentifully interspersed with woods and eminences, formed a concave semicircle, the artillery from which enfiladed on all sides the little plain of Malplaquet, so as to render it literally, in Dumont's words, "une trouée d'enfer." Around this semicircle, redoubts, palisades, abattis, and stockades, were disposed with such skill and judgment, that, literally speaking, there was not a single inequality of ground, (and there were many,) which was not turned to good account. The two *trouées* or openings, in particular, already mentioned, by which it was foreseen the Allies would endeavour to force an entrance, were so enfiladed by cross batteries as to be well-nigh unassailable. Twenty pieces of artillery were placed on a redoubt situated on an eminence near the centre of the field; the remainder were arranged along the field-works, constructed along the lines. Half the army laboured at these works without a moment's intermission during the whole of the 9th and 10th, while the other were under arms, ready to repel any attack which might

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be hazarded. With such vigour were the operations conducted, that by the night of the 10th, the position was deemed impregnable.*

27. Plan of attack by the Allied generals, 10th Sept.

The Allied forces passed these two days in inactivity, awaiting the arrival of the reinforcements from Tournay, which the council of war had deemed indispensable to the commencement of operations. Meanwhile, Marlborough and Eugene had repeatedly reconnoitred the enemy's position, and were fully aware of its growing strength. Despairing of openly forcing such formidable lines, defended by an army so numerous and gallant, they resolved to combine their first attack with a powerful demonstration in rear. With this view, the rear-guard, of nineteen battalions and ten squadrons, which was coming up from Tournay under General Withers, received orders not to join the main body of the army, but, stopping short at St Ghislain, to cross the Haine there, and, traversing the wood of Blangris by a country road, assail the extreme left of the enemy at the farm of La Folie, when the combat had been seriously begun in front. Baron Schulemberg was to attack the wood of Taisnière with forty of Eugene's battalions, supported by forty pieces of cannon, so placed that their shot reached every part of the wood. To distract the enemy's attention, other attacks were directed along the whole line; but the main effort was to be made by Eugene's corps on the wood of Taisnière; and it was from the co-opera-

* Coxe, v. 34–37. Dumont's *Military History*, ii. 381–7. Kausler, 770.

tion of the attack of Schulemberg on its flank, that decisive success was expected.* All the corps had reached their respective points of destination on the evening of the 10th. Schulemberg was near La Folie; Eugene was grouped, in four lines, in front of Taisnière; and the men lay down to sleep, anxiously awaiting the dawn of the eventful morrow.†

28. Feelings of the soldiers on both sides, 11th Sept.

At three in the morning of the 11th, divine service was performed with the utmost decorum at the head of every regiment, and listened to by the soldiers, after the example of their chief, with the most devout attention. The awful nature of the occasion, the momentous interests at stake, the uncertainty who might survive to the close of the day, the protracted struggle soon to be brought to a decisive issue, had banished all lighter feelings, and impressed a noble character on that impressive solemnity. A thick fog overspread the field, under cover of which the troops marched, with the utmost regularity, to their appointed stations: the guns were brought forward to the grand battery in the centre, which was protected on either side by an *épaulement* to prevent an enfilade. No sooner did the French outposts give notice that the Allies were preparing for an attack, than the whole army stood to their arms, and all the working parties, who were still toiling in the trenches, cast aside their tools, and joyfully resumed their places in the ranks. Never, since the commencement of the war, had the spirit of the French soldiers been so high, or had

* *Marlborough's General Orders*, Sept. 10, 1709. KAUSLER, 784, 785.
† COXE, v. 40–44.

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so enthusiastic a feeling been infused into every bosom. They looked forward with confidence to regaining, under their beloved commander, Marshal Villars, the laurels which had been withered in eight successive campaigns, and arresting the flood of conquest which threatened to overwhelm their country. When the general mounted his horse at seven, loud cries of "Vive le Roi!" "Vive le Maréchal de Villars!" burst from their ranks. He himself took the command of the left, giving the post of honour on the right, in courtesy, to Marshal Boufflers. On the Allied side, enthusiasm was not so loudly expressed, but confidence was not the less strongly felt. They relied with reason on the tried and splendid abilities of their chiefs, on their own experienced constancy and success in the field. They had the confidence of veteran soldiers, who had long fought and conquered together. In allusion to the numerous field-works before them, which almost concealed the enemy's ranks from their view, the sarcastic expression passed through the ranks, "We are again about to make war on moles." The fog still lingered on the ground, so as to prevent the gunners seeing to take aim; but at half-past seven it cleared up; the sun broke forth with uncommon brilliancy, and immediately the fire commenced with the utmost vigour from the artillery on both sides.*

29. Commencement of the battle.

For about half an hour the cannon continued to thunder, so as to reach every part of the field of battle with their balls, when Marlborough moved forward his

* Lediard, *Life of Marlborough*, ii. 172–180. Coxe, v. 45–47.

troops in échelon, the right in front, in order to commence his projected attack on the French centre and left. The Dutch, who were on the left, agreeably to the orders they had received, halted when within range of grape, and a violent cannonade was merely exchanged on both sides; but Count Lottum, who commanded the centre of twenty battalions, continued to press on, regardless of the storm of shot and grape with which he was assailed, and when well into the enemy's line, he brought up his left shoulders, and in three lines attacked the right of the wood of Taisnière. Schulemberg, at the same time, with his forty battalions to the right of Lottum, advanced against the wood of Taisnière in front; while Lord Orkney, with his fifteen battalions, as Lottum's men inclined to the right, marched straight forward to the ground they had occupied, and attacked the intrenchment before him in the opening. Eugene, who was with Schulemberg's men, advanced without firing a shot, though suffering dreadfully from the grape of the batteries, till within pistol-shot of the batteries. They were there, however, received by so terrible a discharge of all arms from the intrenchments—the French soldiers laying their pieces deliberately over the parapet, and taking aim within twenty yards of their opponents—that they recoiled above two hundred yards, and were only brought back to the charge by the heroic efforts of Eugene, who exposed his person in the very front of the line. During this conflict, three battalions brought up from the blockade of Mons stole unperceived amidst the tumult in front, into the south-eastern angle of the wood

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of Taisnière, and were making some progress, when they were met by three battalions of French troops, and a vehement fire of musketry soon rang in the recesses of the wood.*

30. Marlborough, after a desperate conflict, carries the wood of Taisnière.

Meanwhile, Marlborough in person led on D'Auvergne's cavalry in support of Lottum's men, who speedily were engaged in a most terrific conflict. They bore without flinching the fire of the French brigade *du Roi*, which manned the opposite works, and, crossing a ravine and small morass, rushed with fixed bayonets, and the most determined resolution, right against the intrenchment. So vehement was the onset, so impetuous the rush, that some of the leading files actually reached the summit of the parapet, and those behind pushing vehemently on, the redoubt was carried amidst deafening cheers. But Villars was directly in its rear, and he immediately led up in person a brigade in the finest order, which expelled the assailants at the point of the bayonet, and regained the work. Marlborough upon this charged at the head of D'Auvergne's cavalry ; and that gallant body of men, three thousand strong, dashed forward, and entered the intrenchments, which were, at the same time, surrounded by some of Lottum's battalions. While this desperate conflict was going on in front and flank of the wood, Withers, with his corps brought up from Tournay, was silently, and with great caution, entering the wood on the side of La Folie, and had already made considerable progress before any great efforts were made to expel them. The advance of this corps in his rear rendered

* Kausler, 786, 787. Coxe, v. 44–49.

it impossible for Villars any longer to maintain the advanced line of works in the front of the wood; it was therefore abandoned, but slowly, and in admirable order —the troops retiring through the trees to the second line of works in their rear, which they prepared to defend to the last extremity.*

31. Bloody repulse of the Prince of Orange on the left.

While this bloody conflict was raging in and around the wood of Taisnière, the half-hour during which the Prince of Orange had been directed to suspend his attack had elapsed, and that gallant chief, impatient of inactivity when the battle was raging with such fury on his right, resolved to move forward in good earnest. The Scotch brigade, led on by the Marquis of Tullibardine, headed the column on the left; to their right were the Dutch, under Spaar and Oxenstiern; while the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, with twenty-one squadrons, was in reserve to support and follow the infantry into the works, when an opening was made. On the word "march" being given, the troops of these various nations, with rival courage, advanced to the attack. The Scotch Highlanders, headed by the gallant Tullibardine,† rushed impetuously forward to the attack, despite a tremendous fire of grape and musketry which issued from the works, and succeeded in reaching the top of the intrenchment. But before they could deploy, they were charged by the French infantry in close order, and driven out. Tullibardine met a glorious death in the redoubt he had won.

* Coxe, v. 48–52. Kausler, 786, 787.

† The regiments of Tullibardine and Hepburn were almost all Atholl Highlanders.

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Equally gallant was the assault, and unpropitious the result of the Prince of Orange's attack on the right of the left towards the French centre. There, too, by a vehement rush, the intrenchment was carried; but the troops which surmounted it had no sooner penetrated it than they were attacked by Boufflers, at the head of fresh troops in close order in front, while a powerful battery opened with grape on their flank. This double attack proved irresistible; the assailants were pushed out of the works with dreadful slaughter. Spaar lay dead on the spot; Hamilton was carried off wounded.*

32. Heroic but ineffectual efforts of the Prince of Orange to restore the combat.

Seeing his men recoil, the Prince of Orange seized a standard, and advancing alone to the slope of the intrenchment, said aloud, "Follow me, my friends; here is your post." But it was all in vain. Boufflers' men from the French second line had now closed up with the first, which lined the works, and a dense mass of bayonets, six deep, bristled at their summit behind the embrasures of the guns. A dreadful rolling fire issued from them; their position could be marked by the ceaseless line of flame, even through the volumes of smoke which enveloped them on all sides; and at length, after displaying the most heroic valour, the Prince of Orange was obliged to draw off his men, with the loss of three thousand killed, and twice that number wounded. Instantly the brigade of Navarre issued with loud shouts out of the intrenchments. Several Dutch battalions were driven back, and some colours, with an advanced battery, fell into the enemy's hands. Boufflers

* KAUSLER, 788. COXE, v. 53, 54.

supported this sally by his grenadiers *à cheval;* but the Prince of Hesse-Cassel came up with his well-appointed squadron on the other side, and, after a short struggle, drove the French back into their works. *

33. Marlborough hastens to the spot, and restores the battle.

Hearing that matters were in this precarious state on the left, Marlborough galloped from the right centre, accompanied by his staff, where Lottum's infantry and D'Auvergne's horse had gained such important advantages. Matters ere long became so alarming, that Eugene also followed in the same direction. On his way along the rear of the line, the English general had a painful proof of the enthusiastic spirit with which his troops were animated, by seeing numbers of the wounded Dutch and Hanoverians, whose hurts had just been bound up by the surgeons, again hastening to the front, to join their comrades, though some, faint from the loss of blood, yet tottered under the weight of their muskets. The reserves were hastily directed to the menaced front, and by their aid the combat was in some degree restored in that quarter; while Marlborough and Eugene laboured to persuade the Prince of Orange, who was burning with anxiety at all hazards to renew the attack, that his operations were only intended as a feint, and that the real effort was to be made on the right, where considerable progress had already been made. †

Order was hardly restored in this quarter, when intelligence arrived from the right that the enemy were

* Coxe, v. 55. Lediard, ii. 182–185.

† Coxe, v. 56, 57. Kausler, 789, 790.

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34. A vigorous attack of Villars on the right, weakens his centre, which Marlborough prepares to attack.

assuming the initiative in the wood of Taisnière, and were pressing hard upon the troops both at La Folie and in front of the wood. In fact, Villars, alarmed at the progress of the enemy on his left in the wood, had drawn considerable reinforcements from his centre, and sent them to the threatened quarter. Marlborough instantly saw the advantage which this weakening of the enemy's centre was likely to give him. While he hastened back, therefore, with all imaginable expedition to the right, to arrest the progress of the enemy in that quarter, he directed Lord Orkney to advance, supported by a powerful body of horse on each flank, directly in at the opening between the two woods, and if possible force the enemy's intrenchments in the centre, now stripped of their principal defenders. These dispositions, adopted on the spur of the moment, and instantly acted upon, proved entirely successful. Eugene galloped to the extreme right, and renewed the attack with Schulemberg's men, while Withers again pressed on the rear of the wood near La Folie. So vigorous was the onset, that the Allies gained ground on both sides of the wood, and Villars, hastening up with the French guards to restore the combat near La Folie, received a wound in the knee, when gallantly heading a charge of bayonets, which obliged him to quit the field. Unable any longer to sit on horseback, he was placed at his earnest desire in a chair, that he might see the battle, and continue in the field; but the pain of the wound and loss of blood soon became such that he fainted, and was carried senseless to Quesnoy. Eugene also was

wounded on the head while rallying his men and leading them gallantly to the charge. His attendants pressed him to retire that the wound might be dressed; but he replied, "If I am fated to die here, to what purpose dress the wound? If I survive, it will be time enough in the evening." With these words he advanced again to the head of the line, and the troops, animated by the heroism of their beloved general, who pressed on though the blood was streaming over his shoulders, followed with such impetuosity that the works were carried, and the victors re-entered the wood pell-mell with the broken enemy.*

35. Decisive attack by Lord Orkney on the centre.

In the centre, still more decisive advantages were gained. Lord Orkney there made the attack with such vigour, that the intrenchments, now not adequately manned, were at once carried; and the horse, following rapidly on the traces of the foot soldiers, broke through at several openings made by the artillery, and spread themselves over the plain, cutting down the fugitives in every direction. Marlborough, upon seeing this advantage, instantly gave the grand battery of forty cannon in the Allied centre orders to advance. With the utmost rapidity the guns were limbered up, and moving on at a quick trot. They soon passed the intrenchments in the centre, and facing to the right and left, opened a tremendous fire of canister and grape on the dense masses of the French cavalry which stood in the rear of the infantry, who were almost all in front among the works. These noble troops, however, bore up gallantly against

* Coxe, v. 57. Lediard, ii. 289–291. Kausler, 789.

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the storm, and even charged the Allied horse before they had time to form within the lines ; but they were unable to make any impression, and retired from the attack sorely shattered by the Allied artillery. *

36. Admirable efforts of Boufflers to regain the day.

The battle was now gained. Villars' position, how strong and gallantly defended soever, was no longer tenable. Pierced through in the centre, with a formidable enemy's battery on either side, thundering on the reserve squadrons, in the very heart of his line, and turned and menaced with rout on the left, it was no longer possible to keep the field. Boufflers, upon whom, in the absence of Villars in consequence of his wound, the direction of affairs had devolved, accordingly prepared for a retreat ; and he conducted it with consummate skill, as well as the most undaunted firmness. Collecting a body of two thousand chosen horse yet fresh, consisting of the *élite* of the horse-guards and garde-du-corps, he charged the Allied horse which had penetrated into the centre, at this time much blown by its severe fatigues in the preceding part of the day. It was accordingly worsted and put to flight ; but all the efforts of this noble body of horsemen were shattered against Orkney's infantry, which, posted on the reverse of the works they had won, poured in, when charged, so close and destructive a fire, that half of the gallant cavaliers were stretched on the plain, and the remainder were forced to make a precipitate retreat.†

Still the indefatigable Boufflers made another effort.

* Coxe, v. 59, 60, Kausler, 788, 789.
† Coxe, v. 59, 60. Kausler, 789, 790.

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37. His able and orderly retreat.

Drawing a large body of infantry from the works on his extreme right, which had been little engaged, he marched them to the left, and, re-forming his squadrons again, advanced to the charge. But Marlborough no sooner saw this, than he charged the garde-du-corps with a body of English horse which he himself led on, and drove them back, while the infantry staggered and reeled, like a sinking ship, under the terrific fire of the Allied guns, which had penetrated the centre. At the same time the Prince of Orange and the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, perceiving that the intrenchments before them were stript of great part of their defenders, renewed the attack; in ten minutes these works were carried; and a tremendous shout, heard along the whole line, announced that the whole left of the position had fallen into the hands of the Allies. In these desperate circumstances, Boufflers and his brave troops did all that skill or courage could to arrest the progress of the victors, and withdraw from the field without any additional losses. Forming his troops into three great masses, with the cavalry which had suffered least in the rear, he slowly, and in perfect regularity, commenced his retreat. The Allies had suffered so much, and were so completely exhausted by the fatigue of this bloody and protracted battle, that they gave them very little molestation. Contenting themselves with pursuing as far as the heath of Malplaquet, and the level ground around Taisniére, they halted, and the men lay down to sleep. Meanwhile the French, in the best order, but in deep dejection, continued their retreat still in three columns; and after crossing the Hon in their rear, reunited below Quesnoy

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and Valenciennes, about twelve miles from the field of battle.*

38. Results of the battle to the Allies.

Such was the desperate battle of Malplaquet, the most bloody and obstinately contested which had yet occurred in the war, and in which it is hard to say to which of the gallant antagonists the palm of valour and heroism is to be given. The victory was unquestionably gained by the Allies, since they forced the enemy's position, drove them to a considerable distance from the field of battle, and hindered the siege of Mons, the object for which both parties fought, from being raised. The valour they displayed had extorted the admiration of their gallant and generous enemies. † Both Eugene and Marlborough exposed themselves more constantly than they had ever done in any former action; and cordial as had been their understanding on all previous occasions, it was generally observed that on this they seemed animated only by a generous emulation which should most aid and support the other. On the other hand, these advantages had been purchased at an enormous sacrifice, and never since the commencement of the

* Coxe, v. 54–63; *Disp.* v. 562, *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle*, Sept. 11, 1709, and *to Mr Wauchope*, same date, v. 598.

† "The Eugenes and Marlboroughs ought to be well satisfied with us during that day; since till then they had not met with resistance worthy of them. They may now say with justice that nothing can stand before them; and indeed what shall be able to stay the rapid progress of these heroes, if an army of one hundred thousand men of the best troops, strongly posted between two woods, trebly intrenched, and performing their duty as well as any brave men could do, were not able to stop them one day? Will you not then own with me that they surpass all the heroes of former ages?" — *Letter of a French Officer who fought at Malplaquet.* Coxe, v. 65.

contest had the scales hung so even between the contending parties. In truth the battle of Malplaquet was a desperate duel between France and England, in which the whole strength of each nation was put forth, and the successful result was rather owing to the superior talent of the English general, and the unconquerable resolution he had communicated to his followers, than to any superiority either of military skill or national resources enjoyed by the victorious party. Nothing had occurred like it since Azincour; nothing occurred like it again till Waterloo. Blenheim itself was not nearly so hard fought. The Allies lost, killed in the infantry alone, five thousand five hundred and forty-four; wounded and missing, twelve thousand seven hundred and six; in all, eighteen thousand two hundred and fifty, of whom two hundred and eighty-six were officers killed, and seven hundred and sixty-two wounded. Including the casualties in the cavalry and artillery, their total loss was not less than twenty thousand men, or nearly a fifth of the number engaged.*

39. Loss of the French, and humanity of Marlborough.

The French loss, though they were worsted in the fight, was less considerable; it did not exceed fourteen thousand men — an unusual circumstance with a beaten army, but easily accounted for, if the formidable nature of the intrenchments which the Allies had to storm in the first part of the action is taken into consideration. In proportion to the numbers engaged, the loss to the victors was not, however, nearly so great as at Waterloo.† Then was seen the prophetic wisdom with which

* Kausler, 791. Coxe, v. 64.

† At Waterloo, there were sixty-nine thousand six hundred and

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Marlborough had so strongly urged upon the British government the propriety of augmenting the Allied force at the commencement of the campaign. But for these, the campaign would have been indecisive, or terminated in misfortune. With the additional troops he so strongly pleaded for, it would have terminated in a decisive victory, and Malplaquet had been Waterloo. Few prisoners, not above five hundred, were made on the field; but the woods and intrenchments were filled with wounded French, whom Marlborough, with characteristic humanity, proposed to Villars to remove to the French headquarters, on condition of their being considered prisoners of war — an offer which that general thankfully accepted. A solemn thanksgiving was read in all the regiments of the army two days after the battle, after which the soldiers of both armies joined in removing the wounded French on two hundred waggons to the French camp. Thus, after the conclusion of one of the bloodiest fights recorded in modern history, the first acts of the victors were in raising the voice of thanksgiving, and doing deeds of mercy.*

No sooner were these pious cares concluded, than the Allies resumed the investment of Mons; Marlborough, with the English and Dutch, having his headquarters at

eighty-six men in Wellington's army, and the loss was twenty-two thousand four hundred and sixty-nine, or one in three nearly; at Malplaquet, it was one in five; at Talavera, one in four—five thousand being killed and wounded out of nineteen thousand eight hundred engaged.—SIBORNE'S *Waterloo*, ii. 352 and 519.

* *Marlborough to Marshal Villars*, 13th September 1709, and *to Mr Secretary Boyle*, 16th September 1709; *Disp.* v. 596–599. COXE, v. 64.

Belian, and Eugene, with the Germans, at Quaregnon. The Prince of Orange, with thirty battalions and as many squadrons, was intrusted with the blockade. Great efforts were immediately made to get the necessary stores and siege equipage up from Brussels; but the heavy rains of autumn set in with such severity, that it was not till the 25th September that the trenches could be opened. Boufflers, though at no great distance, did not venture to disturb the operations. On 9th October, a lodgment was effected in the covered way; on the 17th, the outworks were stormed; and on the 26th, the place surrendered with its garrison, still three thousand five hundred strong. By this important success, the conquest of Brabant was finished; the burden and expense of the war removed from the Dutch provinces; the barrier which they had so long sought after was rendered nearly complete; and the defences of France were so far laid bare, that by the reduction of Valenciennes and Quesnoy, in the next campaign, no fortified place would remain on this great road between the Allies and Paris. Having achieved this important success, the Allied generals put their army into winter quarters at Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, and on the Meuse; while fifty battalions of the French, with one hundred squadrons, were quartered, under the command of the Duke of Berwick, in the neighbourhood of Maubeuge, and the remainder of their great army in and around Valenciennes and Quesnoy.*

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary Boyle,* October 21, 1709. *Disp.* v. 617–621.

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41. Continued decline of Marlborough's influence at court.

During the progress of this short but brilliant campaign, Marlborough was more than ever annoyed and disheartened by the evident and increasing decline of his influence at home. Harley and Mrs Masham continued to thwart him in every way in their power, and scarcely disguised their desire to make the situation of the Duke and Godolphin so uncomfortable, that out of spleen they might resign; in which case the entire direction of affairs would have fallen into their hands.* Influenced by these new favourites, the Queen became cold and resentful to the Duchess of Marlborough, to whom she had formerly been so much attached; and the Duke, perceiving this, strongly advised her to abstain from any correspondence with her Majesty, being convinced that to continue it would be more likely to increase than diminish the estrangement so rapidly growing between them. The Duchess, however, was herself of too irritable a temper to follow this wise advice; reproaches, explanations, and renewed complaints ensued on both sides; and as usual in such cases, where excessive fondness has been succeeded by coldness, all attempts to repair the breach had only the effect of widening it. Numerous events at court, trifles in themselves, but to the jealous "confirmation strong," served

* "Be assured that Mrs Masham and Mr Harley will, underhand, do every thing that can make the business uneasy, particularly to you the Lord Treasurer, and me, for they know well that if we were removed every thing would be in their power. This is what they labour for, believing it would make them both great and happy; but I am very well persuaded it would be their destruction." — *Marlborough to Godolphin*, Nov. 1, 1709. Coxe, v. 105.

to show in what direction the wind was setting. The Duchess took the strong and injudicious step of intruding herself on the Queen, and asking what crime she had committed to produce so great an estrangement between them. This drew from her Majesty a letter, exculpating her from any fault, but ascribing their alienation to a discordance in political opinion, adding, "I do not think it a crime in any one not to be of my mind, or blameable, because you cannot see with my eyes, or hear with my ears." While this relieved Marlborough from the dread of a personal quarrel between the Duchess and her Royal Mistress, it only aggravated the precarious nature of his situation, by showing that the split was owing to a wider and more irremediable division on political subjects. *

42. Unjust criticisms and censures on the campaign.

Encouraged by this powerful support at court, Harley now openly pursued his design of effecting the downfall of Marlborough, and his removal from office, and the command of the armies. The whole campaign, which had terminated so gloriously, was criticised in the most unjust and malignant spirit. The siege of Tournay was useless and expensive; the battle of Malplaquet an unnecessary carnage. It was even insinuated that the Duke had purposely exposed the officers to slaughter, that he might obtain a profit by the sale of their commissions. The preliminaries first agreed to at the Hague were too favourable to France; when Louis rejected them, the rupture of the negotiations rested with Marlborough. In a word, there was nothing

* Coxe, v. 105–111.

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done by the English general, successful or unsuccessful, pacific or warlike, which was not made the subject of strong condemnation and unmeasured invective. Harley even corresponded with the disaffected party in Holland, in order to induce them to cut short the Duke's career of victory by clamouring for a general peace. Louis was represented as invincible, and rising stronger from every defeat; and the prolongation of the war was alleged to be entirely owing to the selfish interests and ambition of the Allied chief. These and similar accusations, loudly re-echoed by all the Tories, and sedulously poured into the royal ear by Harley and Mrs Masham, made such an impression on the Queen, that she did not offer the smallest congratulation to the Duchess on the victory of Malplaquet, nor express the least satisfaction at the Duke's escape from the innumerable dangers which he had incurred. *

43. Injudicious request of Marlborough to be made Captain-general for life.

An ill-timed and injudicious step of Marlborough at this juncture, and one of the few which can be imputed to him in his whole public career, inflamed against him the jealousy of the Queen and the Tories. Perceiving the decline of his influence at court, and anticipating his dismissal from the command of the army at no distant period, he solicited from the Queen a patent constituting him Captain-general for life. In vain he was assured by the Lord Chancellor that such an appointment was wholly unprecedented in English history; he persisted in laying the petition before her Majesty, by whom it was of course refused. Piqued at this disappointment,

* Coxe, v. 115, 116.

he wrote an acrimonious letter to the Queen, in which he reproached her with the neglect of his public services, and bitterly complained of the neglect of the Duchess, and the transfer of the royal favour to Mrs Masham. So deeply did Marlborough feel this disappointment, that on leaving the Hague to return to England, he said publicly to the deputies of the States,—"I am grieved that I am obliged to return to England, where my services to your republic will be turned to my disgrace." *

44. His flattering reception from the Houses of Parliament, 15th Nov.

Marlborough was received in the most flattering manner by the people, when he landed on 15th November, and the thanks of both Houses of Parliament were tendered to him for his great and glorious services. The Queen declared, in her speech from the throne, that this campaign had been at least as glorious as any which had preceded it; and the Chancellor, in communicating the thanks of the House of Lords, added—"This high eulogium must be looked upon as added to, and standing upon the foundation already laid in the records of this House, for preserving your memory fresh to all future times; so that your Grace has also the satisfaction of seeing this everlasting monument of your glory rise every year much higher." Such was the effect produced on both Houses by the presence of the Duke, and the recollection of his glorious services, that liberal supplies for carrying on the war were granted by them. The Commons voted £6,000,000 for the service of the

* SWIFT, *Mem. on Queen's Change of Ministry in* 1710, p. 37. COXE, v. 117, 118.

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ensuing year, and on the earnest representation of Marlborough, an addition was made to the military forces.

45. Increasing jealousies of him at Court.

But in the midst of all these flattering appearances, the hand of destruction was already impending over the British hero. It was mainly caused by the greatness and invaluable nature of his services. Envy, the invariable attendant on exalted merit, had already singled him out as her victim; jealousy, the prevailing weakness of little minds, had prepared his ruin. The Queen had become uneasy at the greatness of her subject. There had even been a talk of the Duke of Argyll arresting him in her name, when in command of the army. Anne lent a ready ear to an insinuation of her flatterers, especially Mrs Masham, that she was enthralled by a single family; that Marlborough was the real sovereign of England, and that the crown was overshadowed by the field-marshal's baton. Godolphin having been violently libelled in a sermon by Dr Sacheverell, at St Saviour's, Southwark, the Doctor was impeached before the House of Lords for the offence. The government of the Tower, usually placed at the disposal of the commander-in-chief, was, to mortify Marlborough, bestowed without consulting him on Lord Rivers. At length matters came to such a pass, and the ascendency of Mrs Masham was so evident, while her influence was exercised in so undisguised a manner to humiliate him, that he prepared the draft of a letter of resignation of his commands to her Majesty, in which, after enumerating his services, and the abuse which Mrs Masham continued to heap on him and

his relations, he concluded with saying — "I hope your Majesty will either dismiss her or myself." * CHAP. V.

46. His remonstrances with the Queen.

Sunderland and several of the Whig leaders warmly approved of this vigorous step; but Godolphin, who foresaw the total ruin of the ministry and himself, in the resignation of the general, had influence enough to prevent its being sent. Instead of doing so, that nobleman had a long private audience with her Majesty on the subject; in which, notwithstanding the warmest professions on her part, and the strong sense she entertained of his great and lasting services, it was not difficult to perceive that a reserve as to future intentions was manifested, which indicated a loss of confidence. Marlborough declared he would be governed in the whole matter by the advice and opinion of his friends; but strongly expressed his own opinion, "that all must be undone if this poison continues about the Queen." † Such, however, was the agony of apprehension of Godolphin at the effects of the Duke's resignation, that he persuaded him to adopt a middle course, the usual resource of second-rate men in critical circumstances, but generally the most hazardous that can be adopted. This plan was to write a warm remonstrance to the Queen, but without making Mrs Masham's removal a condition of his remaining in office. In this letter, after many invectives against Mrs Masham, and a full enumeration of his grievances, he concludes with these words —

* Coxe, v. 124–133.

† *Duchess of Marlborough to Maynwaring*, January 18, 1710. Coxe, v. 134.

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"This is only one of many mortifications that I have met with; and as I may not have many opportunities of writing to you, let me beg of your Majesty to reflect what your own people and the rest of the world must think, who have been witnesses of the love, zeal, and duty with which I have served you, when they shall see that, after all I have done, it has not been able to protect me against the malice of a bed-chamber woman. But your Majesty may be assured that my zeal for you and my country is so great, that in my retirement I shall daily pray for your prosperity, and that those who serve you as faithfully as I have done, may never feel the hard return I have met with."*

47. He determines to resign if Mrs Masham is not removed.

These expressions, how just soever in themselves, and natural in one whose great services had been requited as Marlborough's had been, were not likely to make a favourable impression on the royal mind, and, accordingly, at a private audience which he had soon after of the Queen, he was received in the coldest manner. † He retired in consequence to Blenheim, determined to resign all his commands, unless Mrs Masham was

* *Marlborough to Queen Anne*, January 19, 1710.

† "On Wednesday se'nnight I waited upon the Queen, in order to represent the mischief of such recommendations in the army, and before I came away I expressed all the concern for her change to me, that is natural to a man that has served her so faithfully for many years, which made no impression, nor was her Majesty pleased to take so much notice of me as to ask my Lord Treasurer where I was upon her missing me at Council. I have had several letters from him since I came here, and I cannot find that her Majesty has ever thought me worth naming; when my Lord Treasurer once endeavoured to show her the mischief that would happen, she made him no answer but a bow."—*Marlborough to Lord Somers*, January 21, 1710.

removed from the royal presence. Matters seemed so near a rupture, that the Queen personally applied to several of the Tories, and even Jacobites, who had long kept aloof from court, to support her in opposition to the address expected from both Houses of Parliament on the Duke's resignation.

48. But is persuaded to yield, and is seemingly reconciled to the Queen.

Godolphin and Somers, however, did their utmost to bend the firm general; and they so far succeeded in opposition to his better judgment, and the decided opinions of the Duchess, as to induce him to continue in office without requiring the removal of Mrs Masham from court. The Queen, delighted at this victory over so formidable an opponent, received him at his next audience in the most flattering manner, and with a degree of apparent regard which she had scarcely ever evinced to him in the days of his highest favour. But in the midst of these deceitful appearances his ruin was secretly resolved on; and in order to accelerate his departure from court, the Queen inserted in her reply to the address of the Commons at the close of the session of Parliament, a statement of her resolution to send him immediately to Holland, as, "I shall always esteem him the chief instrument of my glory, and of my people's happiness." He embarked accordingly, and landed at the Brill on March 18th, in appearance possessing the same credit and authority as before, but in reality thwarted and opposed by a jealous and ambitious faction at home, which restrained his most important measures, and prevented him from effecting any thing in future on a level with his former glorious achievements.

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49. Battle of Pultowa, and overthrow of Charles XII.

The year 1709 was signalised by the decisive victory of the Czar Peter over Charles XII. at Pultowa, who was totally routed and irretrievably ruined by the Muscovite forces, commanded by the Czar in person on that disastrous day. This overthrow was one of the most momentous which has occurred in modern times. Not only was a great and dreaded conqueror at once overturned, and ere long reduced to captivity, but a new balance of power was established in the north which has never since been shaken. Sweden was reduced to her natural rank as a third-rate power, from which she had been only raised by the extraordinary valour and military talents of a series of warlike sovereigns, who had succeeded in rendering the Scandinavian warriors, like the Macedonians of old, a race of heroes. Russia, by the same event, acquired the entire ascendency over the other Baltic powers, and obtained that preponderance which she has ever since maintained in the affairs of Europe. Marlborough sympathised warmly with the misfortunes of the heroic sovereign, for whose genius and gallantry he had conceived the highest admiration. But he was too sagacious not to see that his disasters, like those of Napoleon afterwards in the same regions, were entirely the result of his own imprudence; and that if he had judiciously taken advantage of the terror of his name, and the success of his arms, in the outset of his invasion, he might have gained all the objects for which he contended without incurring any serious evil.*

* "If this unfortunate king had been so well advised as to have made peace the beginning of this summer, he might in a great measure

50. Character of Peter the Great of Russia.

Peter the Great, who gained this astonishing and decisive success, was one of the most remarkable men who ever appeared on the theatre of public affairs. He was nothing by halves. For good or for evil he was gigantic. Vigour seems to have been the great characteristic of his mind; but it was often fearfully disfigured by passion, and he was not unfrequently misled by the example of more advanced states. To elevate Russia to an exalted place among nations, and give her the influence which her vast extent and physical resources seemed to put within her reach, was throughout life the great object of his ambition; and he succeeded in it to an extent which naturally acquired for him the unbounded admiration of mankind. His overthrow of the Strelitzes, long the Prætorian guards and terror of the czars of Muscovy, was effected with a vigour and stained by a cruelty similar to that with which Sultan Mahommed, a century after, destroyed the Janissaries at Constantinople. The sight of a young and despotic sovereign leaving the glittering toys and real enjoyments of royalty to labour in the dock-yards of Saardem with his own hands, and instruct his subjects in ship-building by first teaching himself, was too striking and remarkable not to excite universal attention. And when the result of this was seen,—when the Czar was found introducing among his subjects the military discipline, naval archi-

have influenced the peace between France and the Allies, and made other kingdoms happy. I am extremely touched with the misfortunes of this young king. His continued successes, and the contempt he had of his enemies, have been his ruin."—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, August 26, 1709. *Disp.* v. 510.

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tecture, nautical skill, as well as other arts and warlike institutions of Europe, and in consequence long resisting and at length destroying the mighty conqueror who had so long been the terror of Northern Europe, the astonishment of men knew no bounds. He was celebrated as at once the Solon and Scipio of modern times; and literary servility, vying with great and disinterested admiration, extolled him as one of the greatest heroes and benefactors of his species who had ever appeared among men.

51. His errors, and delusion regarding him.

But time, the great dispeller of illusions, whose mighty arm no individual greatness, how great soever, can long withstand, has begun to abate much of this colossal reputation. His temper was violent in the extreme; frequent acts of hideous cruelty, and occasional oppression, signalised his reign: he was often impelled, by ill-directed zeal for the advancement of his people, into measures which in reality and in the end retarded their improvement. More than any other man, he did evil that good might come of it. He impelled his people, as he thought, to civilisation, though, while launching into the stream, hundreds of thousands perished in the waves. "Peter the Great," says Mackintosh, "did not civilise Russia: that undertaking was beyond his genius, great as it was; he only gave the Russians the art of civilised war." The truth was, he attempted what was altogether impracticable. No one man can at once civilise a nation: he can only put it in the way of civilisation. To complete the fabric must be the work of continued effort and sustained industry during many successive

generations. That Peter failed in raising his people to a level with the other nations of Europe in refinement and industry, is no reproach to him. It was impossible to do so in less than several centuries. The real particular in which he erred was, that he departed from the national spirit, that he tore up the national institutions, and violated in numerous instances the strongest national feelings. He clothed his court and capital in European dresses ; but men do not put off old feelings with the costume of their fathers.

52. Real character of his changes.

Peter's civilisation extended no further than the surface. He succeeded in inducing an extraordinary degree of discipline in his army, and the appearance of considerable refinement among his courtiers. He effected no material ameliorations in the condition of his subjects; and by endeavouring to force them at once up to a level with the States of Western Europe, he not only rendered his government unpopular with the rural population, but also prevented his improvements from penetrating the great body of the people. It is easier to remodel an army than change a nation ; and the celebrated *bon-mot* of Diderot, that the Russians were "rotten before they were ripe," is too happy an expression, indicating how much easier it is to introduce the vices than the virtues of civilisation among an unlettered people. To this day the civilisation of Russia has never descended below the higher ranks ; and the efforts of the really patriotic czars who have since wielded the Muscovite sceptre, Alexander and Nicholas, have been mainly in abandoning the fictitious career into which

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Peter turned the people, and the reviving with the old institutions the true spirit and inherent aspirations of the nation. The immense, though less obtrusive, success with which their efforts have been attended, and the gradual though still slow descent of civilisation and improvement through the great body of the people, prove the wisdom of the principles on which they have proceeded. Possibly Russia is yet destined to afford another illustration of the truth of Montesquieu's maxim, that no nation ever yet rose to durable greatness but through institutions in harmony with its spirit. Yet was Peter's attempt, though in many respects a mistaken, a great and glorious one: it was the effort of a rude but lofty and magnanimous mind, which attributes to mankind in general that vigour and ambition of which it is itself conscious. And without shutting our eyes to his many and serious errors, in charity let us hope that the words of Peter on his death-bed have been realised: "I trust that, in respect of the good I have striven to do my people, God will pardon my sins."

CHAPTER VI.

CAMPAIGN OF 1710—PASSAGE OF VILLARS' LINES—CAPTURE OF DOUAY, AIRE, BETHUNE, AND ST VENANT—LAST CAMPAIGN OF MARLBOROUGH IN 1711—SECOND PASSAGE OF VILLARS' LINES—CAPTURE OF BOUCHAIN—FALL AND DEATH OF MARLBOROUGH.

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1. Renewal of the negotiations at the Hague.

On his arrival in Holland on the 18th March 1710, Marlborough again found himself practically involved in the still pending negotiations for peace, over which, from the decline of his influence at court, he had ceased to have any real control. Still exposed to the blasting imputation of seeking to prolong the war for his own private purposes, he was in reality doing his utmost to terminate hostilities. As the negotiation with the ostensible plenipotentiaries of the different courts was at an end, though Louis still continued to make private overtures to the Dutch, in the hope of detaching them from the confederacy, Marlborough took advantage of this circumstance to endeavour to effect an accommodation. At his request, the Dutch agent, Petcum, had again repaired to Paris in the end of 1709, to resume the negotiation; and the *Marlborough Papers* contain numerous letters from him to the Duke, detailing the progress of the overtures.* On the very day after

* *Marlborough to the Earl of Sunderland*, 8th Nov. 1709. *Disp.* iv. 647. Coxe, iv. 167.

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Marlborough's arrival at the Hague, the plenipotentiaries made their report of the issue of the negotiation; but the views of the parties were still so much at variance, that it was evident no hopes of peace could be entertained. Louis was not yet sufficiently humbled to submit to the arrogant demands of the Allies, which went to strip him of nearly all his conquests; and the different powers of the confederacy were each set upon turning the general success of the Alliance to their own private advantage.

2. Rigorous demands of the Allies.

Zenzindorf, on the part of Austria, insisted that not the smallest portion of the Spanish territories in Italy should be ceded to a prince of the house of Bourbon, and declared the resolution of his imperial master to perish with arms in his hands, rather than submit to a partition which would lead to his inevitable ruin. King Charles expressed the same determination, and contended farther for the cession of Roussillon, which had been wrested from Spain since the treaty of the Pyrenees. The Duke of Savoy, who aimed at the acquisition of Sicily from the spoils of the fallen monarch, was equally obstinate for the prosecution of the war. Godolphin, Somers, and the Dutch Pensionary, inclined to peace, and were willing to purchase it by the cession of Sicily to Louis; and Marlborough gave this his entire support, provided the evacuation of Spain, the great object of the war, could be secured.* But all their efforts were in vain. The ambitious designs of Austria and Savoy prevailed over their pacific counsels;

* Coxe, iv. 169. Lamberti, vi. 37, 49.

and we have the valuable authority of De Torcy, who in the former congress had accused the Duke of breaking off the negotiation, that in this year the rupture was entirely owing to the efforts of Count Zenzindorf.* Marlborough, however, never ceased to long for a termination of hostilities, and took the field with a heavy heart, relieved only by the hope that one more successful campaign would give him what he so ardently desired, the rest consequent upon a general peace.†

3. Plan of the campaign agreed on between Eugene and Marlborough.

War being resolved on, Marlborough and Eugene met at Tournay on the 28th April, and commenced the campaign by besieging the fort of Mortagne, which capitulated on the same day. Their force already amounted to sixty thousand men, and as the troops were daily coming up from their cantonments, it was expected soon to amount to double that number. The plan of operations was soon settled between these two great men; no difference of opinion ever occurred between them, no jealousy ever marred their co-operation. They determined to commence serious operations by attacking Douay—a strong fortress, and one of the last of the first

* *Note to Petcum*, August 10, 1710. *Marlborough Papers;* and COXE, iv. 173.

† "I am very sorry to tell you that the behaviour of the French looks as if they had no other desire than that of carrying on the war. I hope God will bless this campaign, for I see nothing else that can *give us peace either at home or abroad.* I am so discouraged by every thing I see, that I have never, during this war, gone into the field with so heavy a heart as at this time. I own to you, that the present humour in England gives me a good deal of trouble; for I cannot see how it is possible they should mend till every thing is yet worse."—*Marlborough to Duchess Marlborough*, Hague, 14th April 1710. COXE, iv. 179.

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order which, in that quarter, guarded the French territory. To succeed in this, however, it was necessary to pass the French lines, which were of great strength, and were guarded by Marshal Montesquieu at the head of forty battalions and twenty squadrons. Douay itself was also strongly protected both by nature and art. On the one side lay the Haine and the Scarpe; in the centre was the canal of Douay; on the other side were the lines of La Bassie, which had been strengthened with additional works since the close of the campaign. Marlborough was very sanguine of success, as the French force was not yet collected, and he was considerably superior in number; and he wrote to Godolphin on the same night,—"The orders are given for marching this night, so that I hope my next will give you an account of our being in Artois."*

4. Passage of the lines of the Scarpe, 28th April.

The Duke operated at once by both wings. On the one wing he detached the Prince of Wirtemberg, with fifteen thousand men, by Pont-a-Tessin to Pont-a-Vendin, where the French lines met the Dyle and the canal of Douay; while on the other Prince Eugene moved forward Count Fels, with a considerable corps, towards Pont Auby on the same canal. The whole army followed in two columns, the right commanded by Eugene, and the left by Marlborough. The English general secured the passage at Pont-a-Vendin without resistance; and Eugene, though baffled at Pont Auby, succeeded in getting over the canal at Sant and Courieres without serious loss. The first defences were thus

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 20th April 1710. COXE, iv. 182.

forced; and that night the two wings having formed a junction, lay on their arms in the plain of Lens, while Montesquieu precipitately retired behind the Scarpe, in the neighbourhood of Vitry. Next morning the troops, overjoyed at their success, continued their advance. Marlborough sent forward General Cadogan, at the head of the English troops, to Pont-a-Rache, to circumscribe the garrison of Douay, on the canal of Marchiennes, on the north; while Eugene, encamping on the other side of the Scarpe, completed the investment on the west. The perfect success of this enterprise without any loss was matter of equal surprise and joy to the Duke, who wrote to the Duchess in the highest strain of satisfaction at his bloodless triumph. It was entirely owing to the suddenness and secrecy of his movements, which took the enemy completely unawares; for, had the enterprise been delayed four days longer, its issue would have been extremely doubtful, and thousands of men must, at all events, have been sacrificed.*

5. Description of Douay.

Douay, which was immediately invested after this success, is a fortress of considerable strength, in the second line which covers the French province of Artois. Less populous than Lille, it embraces a wider circuit

* "In my last I had but just time to tell you we had passed the lines. I hope this happy beginning will produce such success this campaign as must put an end to the war. I bless God for putting it into their heads not to defend their lines; for at Pont-a-Vendin, when I passed, the Marshal D'Artagnan was with twenty thousand men, which, if he had stayed, must have rendered the event very doubtful. But, God be praised, we are come without the loss of any men. The excuse the French make is, that we came four days before they expected us."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, 21st April 1710. COXE, ix. 184.

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within its ample walls. Its principal defence consists in the marshes, which, on the side of Tournay, where the attack might be expected, render it extremely difficult of approach, especially in the rainy season. Access to it is defended by Fort Scarpe, a powerful outwork, capable of standing a separate siege. The garrison consisted of eight thousand men under the command of the Marquis Albergotti, an officer of the highest talent and bravery; and under him were the renowned Valory, to direct the engineers, and the not less celebrated Chevalier de Jaucourt, to command the artillery. From a fortress of such strength, so defended, the most resolute resistance might be expected, and no efforts were spared on the part of the Allied generals to overcome it.

6. Its investment and siege, which Villars tries to raise, 11th May.

The investment was completed on the 4th, and the trenches opened on the 5th May. On the 7th, the head of the sap was advanced to within two hundred and fifty yards of the exterior palisades: but the besiegers that night experienced a severe check from a vigorous sally of the besieged with twelve hundred men, by which two English regiments were nearly cut to pieces. But, on the 9th, a great train of artillery, consisting of two hundred pieces, with a large supply of ammunition, arrived from Tournay; on the 11th, the advanced works were strongly armed, and the batteries were pushed up to the covered way, where they thundered across the ditch against the rampart. The imminent danger of this important stronghold now seriously alarmed the French court; and Marshal Villars, who commanded their great army on the Flemish frontier, received the

most positive orders to advance to its relief. By great exertions, he had now collected one hundred and fifty-three battalions and two hundred and sixty-two squadrons, which were pompously announced as mustering one hundred and fifty thousand combatants, and certainly amounted to more than ninety thousand. The Allied force was almost exactly equal in battalions and squadrons; it consisted of one hundred and fifty-five battalions and two hundred and sixty-one squadrons, but the number of men was less than that of the French, being only eighty thousand.

7. Both armies expect another battle.

Villars broke up from the vicinity of Cambray on the 21st May, and advanced in great strength towards Douay. Marlborough and Eugene immediately made the most vigorous preparations to receive him. Thirty battalions only were left to prosecute the siege; twelve squadrons were placed in observation at Pont-a-Rache; and the remainder of the army, about sixty thousand strong, were concentrated in a strong position, so as to cover the siege, on which all the resources of art, so far as the short time would admit, had been lavished. Every thing was prepared for a mighty struggle. The whole guns were mounted on batteries four hundred paces from each other; the infantry was drawn up in a single line along the intrenchment, and filled up the entire interval between the artillery; the cavalry were arranged in two lines, seven hundred paces in rear of the foot-soldiers. It seemed another Malplaquet, in which the relative position of the two armies was reversed, and the French were to storm the

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intrenched position of the Allies. Every man in both armies expected a decisive battle; and Marlborough, who was heartily tired of the war, wrote to the Duchess, that he hoped for a victory, which should at once end the war, and restore him to private life.*

8. Villars retires without fighting.

Yet there was no battle. The lustre of Blenheim and Ramilies played round Marlborough's bayonets, and the recollection of Turin tripled the effective force of Eugene's squadrons. Villars advanced on the 1st June, with all the pomp and circumstance of war, to within musket-shot of the Allied position; and he had not only the authority but the recommendation of Louis to hazard a battle. He boasted that his force amounted to a hundred and sixty thousand men.† But he did not venture to make the attack. To Marlborough's great regret, he retired without fighting; and the English general, at the age of threescore, was left to pursue the fatigues and the labours of a protracted campaign, in which, for the first time in his life, he was doubtful of

* "I hope God will so bless our efforts, that if the Queen should not be so happy as to have a prospect of peace before the opening of the next session of parliament, she and all her subjects may be convinced we do our best here in the army to put a speedy and good period to this bloody war."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, May 12, 1710.

"I hear of so many disagreeable things, that make it very reasonable, both for myself and you, to take no steps but what may lead to a quiet life. This being the case, am I not to be pitied that am every day in danger of exposing my life for the good of those who are seeking my ruin? God's will be done. If I can be so blessed as to end this campaign with success, things must very much alter to persuade me to come again at the head of the army."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, 19th May 1710. Coxe, iv. 191, 192.

† *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 26th May and 2d June 1710.

success, from knowing the malignant eyes with which he was regarded by the ruling factions in his own country. "I long," said he, "for an end of the war, so God's will be done; whatever the event may be, I shall have nothing to reproach myself with, having, with all my heart, done my duty, and being hitherto blessed with more success than was ever known before. My wishes and duty are the same; but I can't say I have the same prophetic spirit I used to have; for in all the former actions I never did doubt of success, we having had constantly the great blessing of being of one mind. I cannot say it is so now; for I fear some are run so far into villanous faction, that it would more content them to see us beaten; but if I live I will be watchful that it shall not be in their power to do much hurt. The discourse of the Duke of Argyll is, that when I please there will then be peace. I suppose his friends speak the same language in England; so that I must every summer venture my life in a battle, and be found fault with in winter for not bringing home peace. No, I wish for it with all my heart and soul."*

Villars having retired without fighting, the operations of the siege were resumed with redoubled vigour. On the 16th June, signals of distress were sent up from the town, which the French marshal perceived, and he made in consequence a show of returning to interrupt the siege; but his movements came to nothing. Marlborough, to counteract his movement, repassed the Scarpe at Vitry, and took up a position directly barring the

9. Fall of Douay, 26th June.

* *Marlborough to the Duchess*, 12th June 1710. COXE, iv. 197.

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line of advance of the French marshal, while Eugene prosecuted the siege. Villars again retired without fighting. On the 22d, the fort of Scarpe was breached, and the sap was advanced to the counterscarp of the fortress, the walls of which were violently shaken; and on the 26th, Albergotti, who had no longer any hope of being relieved, and who saw preparations made for a general assault, capitulated with the garrison, now reduced to four thousand five hundred men.*

10. The Allies are unable to reach Arras, but besiege Bethune, 15th July.

On the surrender of Douay, the Allied generals intended to besiege Arras, the *last* of the triple line of fortresses which on that side covered France, and between which and Paris no fortified place remained to arrest the march of an invader. On the 10th July, Marlborough crossed the Scarpe at Vitry, and, joining Eugene, their united forces, nearly ninety thousand strong, advanced towards Arras. But Villars, who felt the extreme importance of this last stronghold, had exerted himself to the utmost for its defence. He had long employed his troops on the construction of new lines of great strength on the Crinchon, stretching from Arras to the Somme, and he had here collected nearly a hundred thousand men, and a hundred and thirty pieces of cannon. After reconnoitring this position, the Allied generals concurred in thinking that it was equally impossible to force it, and to undertake the siege of Arras, while the enemy, in such strength and so strongly posted, lay on its flank. Their first intention, on finding themselves baffled in this project, was to seize Hesdin on the

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 26th June 1710.— *Disp.* iv. 696.

Cancher, which would have left the enemy no strong place between them and the coast. But the skilful dispositions of Villars, who on this occasion displayed uncommon abilities and foresight, rendered this design abortive, and it was therefore determined to attack Bethune. This place, which was surrounded with very strong works, was garrisoned by nine thousand men, under the command of M. Puy Vauban, nephew of the celebrated marshal of the same name. But as an attack on it had not been expected, the necessary supplies for a protracted resistance had not been fully introduced when the investment was completed on the 15th July.*

11. Great skill with which Villars averted the invasion of France on this occasion. Fall of Bethune, 28th August.

Villars, upon seeing the point of attack now fully declared, moved in right columns upon Hobarques, near Montenencourt. Eugene and Marlborough upon this assembled their covering army, and changed their front, taking up a new line stretching from Mont St Eloi to Le Comte. Upon advancing to reconnoitre the enemy, Marlborough discovered that the French, advancing to raise the siege, were busy constructing a new set of lines, which stretched across the plain from the rivulet Ugie to the Lorraine, and the centre of which, at Avesnes Le Comte, was already strongly fortified. It now appeared how much Villars had gained by the skilful measures which had diverted the Allies from their projected attack upon Arras. It lay upon the direct road to Paris. Bethune, though of importance to the ulti-

* *Considerat. sur la Camp. de* 1710, *par M. le Marshal Villars*; and COXE, iv. 192.

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mate issue of the war, was not of the same present moment. It lay on the flank on the second line, Arras in front, and was the only remaining fortress in the last. By means of the new lines which he had constructed, the able French marshal had erected a fresh protection for his country, when its last defences were well-nigh broken through. By simply holding them, the interior of France was covered from incursion, time was gained not only for raising fresh armaments in the interior for its defence, but what was of more importance to Louis, for waiting the issue of the intrigues in England, which were soon expected to overthrow the Whig cabinet. Villars, on this occasion, proved the salvation of his country, and justly raised himself to the very highest rank among its military commanders. His measures were the more to be commended that they exposed him to the obloquy of leaving Bethune to its fate, which surrendered by capitulation, with its numerous garrison and accomplished commander, on the 28th August.*

12. Increasing animosity to Marlborough in England. He intends to besiege Calais.

Notwithstanding the loss of so many fortresses on the endangered frontier of his territory, Louis XIV. was so much encouraged by what he knew of the great change which was going on in the councils of Queen Anne, that, expecting daily an entire revolution in the ministry, and the overthrow of the war party in the Cabinet, he resolved on the most vigorous prosecution of the contest. He made clandestine overtures to the secret advisers of the Queen, in the hope of establishing

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 29th August 1710. — *Disp.* iv. 581. COXE, iv. 294.

that separate negotiation which at no distant period proved so successful. Torcy, the Duke's enemy, triumphantly declared, "what we lose in Flanders, we shall gain in England."* To frustrate these machinations, and if possible rouse the national feeling more strongly in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war, Marlborough determined to lay siege to Aire and St Venant, which, though off the line of direct attack on France, laid open the way to Calais, which, if supported at home, he hoped to reduce before the conclusion of the campaign.† He entertained the most sanguine hopes of success from this design, which was warmly approved of by Godolphin; but he received at this time such discouraging accounts of the precarious condition of his influence at court, that he justly concluded he would not receive adequate support from England, out of which the main supplies for the enterprise must be drawn. He in concert with Eugene, therefore, wisely resolved to forego this dazzling but perilous project for the present, and to content himself with the solid advantages, unattended with risk, of reducing Aire and St Venant.

Having taken their resolution, the confederate generals began their march in the beginning of September,

* Coxe, iv. 343, 344.

† "I am of opinion that, after the siege of Aire, I shall have it in my power to attack Calais. This is a conquest which would very much prejudice France, and ought to have a good effect for the Queen's service in England; but I see so much malice levelled at me, that I am afraid it is not safe for me to make any proposition, lest, if it should not succeed, my enemies should turn it to my disadvantage." —*Marlborough to Godolphin*, 11th August 1710. Coxe, iv. 343.

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13. Siege and capture of St Venant, 29th September.

and on the 6th of that month, both places were invested. Aire, which is comparatively of small extent, was garrisoned by only five thousand seven hundred men; but Venant was a place of great size and strength, and had a garrison of fourteen battalions of foot and three regiments of dragoons, mustering eight thousand combatants. They were under the command of the Count de Guebriant, a brave and skilful commander. Both were at this time protected by inundations, which retarded extremely the operations of the besiegers, the more especially as the autumnal rains had set in early this year, and with more than usual severity. While anxiously awaiting the cessation of this obstacle, and the arrival of a great convoy of heavy cannon and ammunition which was coming up from Ghent, the Allied generals received the disheartening intelligence of the total defeat of this important convoy, which, though guarded by sixteen hundred men, was attacked and destroyed by a French corps on the 19th September. This loss affected Marlborough the more sensibly, that it was the first disaster of moment which had befallen him during nine years of incessant warfare.* But notwithstanding this loss, St Venant was so severely pressed by the fire of the besiegers, under the Prince of Anhalt, who

* "Till within these few days, during these *nine years* I have never had occasion to send ill news. Our powder and other stores, for the carrying on these two sieges, left Ghent last Thursday, under the convoy of twelve hundred foot and four hundred and fifty horse. They were attacked by the enemy and beaten, so that they blew up the powder, and sunk the store-boats."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, 22d September 1710. COXE, iv. 365.

conducted the operations with uncommon vigour and ability, that the garrison was compelled to capitulate on the 29th, on condition of being conducted to St Omer, not to serve again till regularly exchanged.

14. And of Aire, 12th Nov.

Aire still held out, as the loss of the convoy from Ghent, and the dreadful rains which fell almost without intermission during the whole of October, very greatly retarded the progress of the siege. The garrison, too, under the command of the brave governor, made a most resolute defence. Sickness prevailed to a great extent in the Allied army; the troops were for the most part up to the knees in mud and water; and the rains, which fell night and day without intermission, precluded the possibility of finding a dry place for their lodging. It was absolutely necessary, however, to continue the siege; for, independent of the credit of the army being staked on its success, it had become impossible, as Marlborough himself said, to draw the cannon from the trenches.* The perseverance of the Allied commanders was at length rewarded by success. On the 12th November the fortress capitulated, and the garrison, still three thousand six hundred and twenty-eight strong, marched out prisoners, leaving sixteen hundred sick and wounded in the town. This conquest, which concluded the campaign, was, however, dearly purchased by the loss of nearly seven thousand men killed and wounded in the Allied ranks, exclusive of the sick, who, amidst those

* "Take it we must, for we cannot draw the guns from the batteries. But God knows when we shall have it; night and day our poor men are up to the knees in mud and water."'—*Marlborough to Godolphin*, 27th October 1710.

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pestilential marshes, had now swelled to double that number.*

15. Increase of Marlborough's difficulties at home.

Although the capture of four such important fortresses as Douay, Bethune, St Venant, and Aire, with their garrisons, amounting to thirty thousand men, who had been taken in them during the campaign, was a most substantial advantage, and could not fail to have a most important effect on the final issue of the war, yet these results were not productive of so much natural exultation as the victories of the preceding campaigns. There had been no brilliant victory like Blenheim, Ramilies, or Oudenarde, to silence envy and defy malignity; the successes, though little less real, had not been so dazzling. The intriguers about the court, the malcontents in the country, eagerly seized on this circumstance to calumniate the Duke, and accused him of unworthy motives in the conduct of the war: he was protracting it for his own private purposes, reducing it to a strife of lines and sieges, when he might at once terminate it by a decisive battle, and gratifying his ruling passion of avarice by the lucrative appointments which he enjoyed himself, or divided among his friends.

16. General alarm at the augmentation of the public burdens.

The great increase in the public burdens of the country, a subject which never fails to find a responsive echo in the English breast, added tenfold weight to these representations. Such was the clamour against the augmentation of the public debt and taxes, that it had become absolutely stunning. It must be confessed there was great foundation for the complaints so generally

* *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 13th November 1710.—*Disp.* iv. 685–689. COXE, iv. 366, 367.

made on this subject. The annual expenditure of the nation in the last year of the reign of James II. had been, as Bolingbroke tells us, about £2,000,000; and the supplies voted by the Commons had already for several years been six, and had this year reached the unprecedented amount of seven millions. Large loans were annually contracted, the interest of which was not only burdensome in itself, but threatened, as it was thought, at no distant period entirely to swallow up the whole landed and realised property of the country. Men could see no end to this constant increase of taxation and such additions to the public debt. They began to think they might pay too dear for glory, for independence, or even for freedom. The public debt, which was only £664,000 at the Revolution, had since increased so rapidly that it was swelled by £16,000,000 during the reign of William, and that contracted in the reign of Anne already exceeded £34,000,000, while at her death it amounted to £37,000,000.* The public taxes had nearly tripled during the same period. Where, it was asked, is this to end? Of twenty-two years which have elapsed since the Revolution, eighteen have been spent in constant and expensive wars. What national resources, what public freedom can stand such a strain?

*	Debt.	Interest.	Revenue.
National Debt at the Revolution	£664,253	£39,865	£2,001,865
Increase during William's reign	15,730,439	1,271,087	
Debt at Anne's accession	16,394,702	1,310,952	
Increase during Anne's reign	37,750,661	2,040,416	
Debt at death of Anne	54,145,363	3,351,368	5,641,803

—ALISON'S *Europe*, v. 538.—*Revenue Tables*, 70-89.

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17. Argument of Bolingbroke on the subject.

"It is impossible," says Bolingbroke, "to look back without indignation at the mysterious iniquity by which this system has been matured, or horror to the consequences that may ensue from it. The ordinary expenses of government are defrayed, even in time of peace, in great part by anticipations and mortgages. In time of peace,—in days of prosperity as we boast them to be,—we contract new debts, we create new funds. What must happen when we go to war, or are in national distress? What will happen when we have mortgaged and funded all we have to mortgage and fund: when we have mortgaged all the produce of land, and all the land itself? Who can answer that, when we come to such extremities, or have them more nearly in prospect, ten millions of people will consent to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, to maintain the two-hundredth part of that number in ease and plenty? Who can answer that the whole body of the people will suffer themselves to be treated, in favour of a handful of men, as the poor Indians are in favour of the Spaniards; to be parcelled out in lots, as it were, and to be assigned like these Indians to the Spanish planters, to toil and starve for the proprietors of the several funds?"* Probably most persons will be of opinion that these questions suggest matter for serious and anxious thought, even with all the experience we have since had of the prodigious resources which the industry and activity of Great Britain can develop. It may be conceived, then, what a sen-

* *A Dissertation upon Parties.* BOLINGBROKE'S *Works*, iii. 296, 297. Ed. 1809.

sation they produced, when the funding system, introduced with the Revolution, was yet in its infancy; when the capability of the nation to bear an increase of burdens was unknown, and when all the obloquy arising from so rapid and alarming an increase of the public debts and burdens was, alike by friends and enemies, directed against the victorious general, who alone, it was said, profited by them!

18. Real causes of the evils complained of.

And in truth Marlborough bore the brunt of the whole. Yet nothing could be more unjust than this concentration of the public discontent on his head, when in reality the evils complained of were the direct and unavoidable consequences of the great convulsion by which the family on the throne had been changed. It was no fault of Marlborough that the nation since the Revolution had been involved in almost constant wars: they had only to thank him for having rendered them for the last ten years constantly successful. The real cause of the warfare, and of the enormous increase of the debt to which it had given rise, was the ambition of Louis XIV., which had arrayed all Europe in a league against him, and the Revolution of 1688, which had placed England at its head. Great as had been, and were destined to be, the benefits of that change, it was attended in the first instance by most disastrous consequences. No nation, even for the most just of causes, can overturn an existing government without suffering deeply for it, especially in its pecuniary interests. France felt this bitterly after its two successful revolutions in

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1789 and 1830; England felt it with almost equal severity after the expulsion of the Stuarts. The "unbought loyalty of men, the cheap defence of nations," was at an end. Generous attachment to the crown being no longer to be relied on, the foundations of government required to be laid in the selfish interests of its supporters. Corruption on a great scale became necessary to maintain the authority of government; the contraction of debt became a part of its policy to interest the public creditors in the existing order of things. Parliamentary influence had come in place of prerogative. The King did nothing of his own authority; but he got an obsequious parliament to do whatever he desired. The national debt and public taxes grew alike with the external dangers and internal insecurity of the new government. These evils had no connexion with Marlborough; but they were all imputed to him, because of his great influence and colossal fame, and because he was the visible head of the war party. Hence the general obloquy with which he was assailed. Men will impute evils under which they suffer to any thing but the real cause—their own conduct.

19. Envy of him among his own party.

But it was not only among the populace and his political opponents that these prejudices prevailed; his greatness and fame had become an object of envy to his own party. Orford, Wharton, and Halifax had on many occasions evinced their distrust of him; and even Somers, who had long stood his friend, was inclined to think the power of the Duke of Marlborough too great,

and the emoluments and offices of his family and connexions immoderate.* The Duchess inflamed the discord between him and the Queen, by positively refusing to come to any conciliation with her rival, Mrs Masham. The discord increased daily, and great were the efforts made to aggravate it. To the Queen, the never-failing device was adopted of representing the victorious general as lording it over the throne; as likely to eclipse even the crown by the lustre of his fame; as too dangerous and powerful a subject for a sovereign to tolerate. Matters came to such a pass, in the course of the summer of 1710, that Marlborough found himself thwarted in every request he made, every project he proposed; and he expressed his entire nullity to the Duchess, by the emphatic expression, that he was a "mere sheet of white paper, upon which his friends might write what they pleased."†

20. Paltry difficulties thrown in the way of the completion of Blenheim.

The envy at the Duke appeared in the difficulties which were now started by the Lords of the Treasury in regard to the prosecution of the works at Blenheim. This noble monument of a nation's gratitude had hitherto proceeded rapidly; the stately design of Vanbrugh was rapidly approaching its completion; and so anxious had the Queen at first been to see it finished, that she got a model of it placed in the royal palace of Kensington. Now, however, petty and unworthy objections were started on the score of expense, and attempts were made, by delaying payment of the sums from the

* CUNNINGHAM, ii. 305.

† *Marlborough to the Duchess*, 26th July 1710, COXE, iv. 299.

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Treasury, to throw the cost of completing the building on the great general. He had penetration enough, however, to avoid falling into the snare; and actually suspended the progress of the work when the Treasury warrants were withheld. He constantly directed that the management of the building should be left to the Queen's officers; and, by steadily adhering to this system, he shamed them into continuing the work.*

21. Attempts to gain over Marlborough to the Tories.

Marlborough's name and influence, however, were too great to be entirely neglected, and the party which was now rising into supremacy at court were anxious, if possible, to secure them for their own side. They made, accordingly, secret overtures to him; and it was even insinuated that, if he would abandon the Whigs, and coalesce with them, he would entirely regain the royal favour, and might aspire to the highest situation which a subject could hold. Lord Bolingbroke has told us what the conditions of this alliance were to be:—"He was to abandon the Whigs, his new friends, and take up with the Tories, his old friends; to engage heartily in the true interests, and no longer leave his country a prey to rapine and faction. He was, besides, required to restrain the rage and fury of his wife. Their offers were coupled with threats of an impeachment, and boasts that sufficient evidence could be adduced to carry a prosecution through both Houses."† To terms so degrading,

* *Marlborough to the Duchess*, 25th October and 24th November 1710. COXE, iv. 351, 352.

† BOLINGBROKE'S *Corresp.* i. 41; *Mr Secretary St John to Mr Drummond*, 20th Dec. 1710.

the Duke answered in a manner worthy of his high reputation. He declared his resolution to be of no party, to vote according to his conscience, and to be as hearty as his new colleagues in support of the Queen's government and the welfare of the country. This manly reply increased the repulsive feelings with which he was regarded by the ministry, who seem now to have finally resolved on his ruin; while the intelligence that such overtures had been made having got wind, sowed distrust between him and the Whig leaders, which was never afterwards entirely removed. But he honourably declared that he would be governed by the Whigs, whom he would never desert; and that they could not suspect the purity of his motives in so doing, as they had now lost their majority in the House of Commons.* CHAP. VI.

Parliament met on the 25th November; and Marlborough, in the end of the year, returned to London. But he soon received decisive proof of the altered temper both of government and the country towards him. The majority in the House of Commons was now against him, as it had for some time been in the country. The last election had turned the scale in favour of the Tories. In the Queen's speech, no notice was taken of the late successes in Flanders, no vote of thanks

22. Ungrateful reception of Marlborough by the Ministers and country.

* "I beg you to lose no time in sending me, to the Hague, the opinion of our friend mentioned in my letter; for I would be governed by the Whigs, from whose principle and interest I will never depart. Whilst they had a majority in the House of Commons, they might suspect it might be my interest; but now they must do me the justice to see that it is my inclination and principle which makes me act."—*Marlborough to the Duchess*, Nov. 9, 1710. COXE, iv. 360.

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for his services in the campaign was moved by ministers; and they even contrived, by a side-wind, to get quit of one proposed, to their no small embarrassment, by Lord Scarborough. The Duchess, too, was threatened with removal from her situation at court; and Marlborough avowed that he knew the Queen was "as desirous for her removal as Mr Harley and Mrs Masham can be." The violent temper and proud unbending spirit of the Duchess were ill calculated to heal such a breach, which in the course of the winter became so wide, that her removal from the situation she held, as mistress of the robes, was only prevented by the fear that, in the vehemence of her resentment, she might publish the Queen's correspondence, and that the Duke, whose military services could not yet be spared, might resign his command. Libels against both the Duke and the Duchess daily appeared, and passed entirely unpunished, though the freedom of the press was far from being established. Three officers were dismissed from the army for drinking his health. When he waited on the Queen, on his arrival in England, in the end of December, she said,—"I must request you will not suffer any vote of thanks to you to be moved in Parliament this year, *as my ministers will certainly oppose it.*" Such was the return made by government to the hero who had raised the power and glory of England to an unprecedented pitch, and who in that very campaign had cut deeper into the iron frontier of France than had ever been done in any former one.*

* Coxe, iv. 405.

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23. Dismissal of the Duchess of Marlborough.

The female coterie who aided at St James's the male opponents of Marlborough, were naturally extremely solicitous to get the Duchess removed from her situations as head of the Queen's household and keeper of the privy purse; and ministers were only prevented from carrying their wishes into effect by their apprehension, if these wishes were executed, of the Duke's resigning his command of the army. In an audience, on 17th January 1711, Marlborough presented a letter to her Majesty from the Duchess, couched in terms of extreme humility, in which she declared that his anxiety was such, at the requital his services had received, that she apprehended he would not live six months.* The Queen at first refused to read it; and when at length, at the Duke's earnest request, she agreed to do so, she coldly observed,—"I cannot change my resolution." Marlborough, in the most moving terms, and with touching eloquence, entreated her Majesty not to dismiss the Duchess till she had no more need of her services, by the war being finished, which, he hoped, would be in less than a year; but he received no other answer, but a peremptory demand for the surrender of the gold key, the symbol of her office, within three days. Unable to obtain any relaxation in his sovereign's resolution, Marl-

* "Though I never thought of troubling your Majesty again in this manner, yet the circumstances I see my Lord Marlborough in, and the apprehension I have that he cannot live six months, if there is not some end put to his sufferings on my account, make it impossible for me to resist doing every thing in my power to ease him."—*Duchess of Marlborough to Queen Anne*, 17th Jan. 1711. COXE, iv. 410.

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borough withdrew with the deepest emotions of indignation and sorrow. The Duchess, in a worthy spirit, immediately took her resolution; she sent in her resignation, with the gold key, that very night. So deeply was Marlborough hurt at this extraordinary ingratitude for all his services, that he at first resolved to resign his whole commands, and retire altogether into private life.

24. Marlborough with great reluctance withholds his intended resignation.

From this intention he was only diverted, and that with great difficulty, by the efforts of Godolphin and the Whigs at home, and Prince Eugene and the Pensionary Heinsius abroad, who earnestly besought him not to abandon the command, as that would at once dissolve the grand alliance, and ruin the common cause. We can sympathise with the feelings of a victorious warrior who felt reluctant to forego, by one hasty step, the fruit of nine years of victories: we cannot but respect the self-sacrifice of the patriot who preferred enduring mortifications himself, to endangering the great cause of religious freedom and European independence. Influenced by these considerations, Marlborough withheld his intended resignation. The Duchess of Somerset was made mistress of the robes, and Mrs Masham obtained the confidential situation of keeper of the privy purse. Malignity, now sure of impunity, heaped up invectives on the falling hero. His integrity was calumniated, his courage even was questioned, and the most consummate general of that, or perhaps any other age, was represented as the lowest of mankind.* It soon appeared how unfounded had been the aspersions cast

* SMOLLETT, c. x. § 20.

upon the Duchess, as well as the Duke, for their conduct in office. Her accounts, after being rigidly scrutinised, were returned to her without any objection being stated against them; and Marlborough, anxious to quit that scene of ingratitude and intrigue for the real theatre of his glory, soon after set out for the army in Flanders.*

25. Prosperous condition of the army in the Low Countries.

He arrived at the Hague on the 4th March; and, although no longer possessing the confidence of government, or intrusted with any control over diplomatic measures, he immediately set himself with the utmost vigour to prepare for military operations. Great efforts had been made by both parties, during the winter, for the resumption of hostilities, on even a more extended scale than in any preceding campaign. Marlborough found the army in the Low Countries extremely efficient and powerful; diversions were promised on the side both of Spain and Piedmont; and a treaty had been concluded with the Spanish malcontents, in consequence of which a large part of the Imperial forces were rendered disposable, and Prince Eugene was preparing to lead them into the Low Countries. But, in the midst of these flattering prospects, an event occurred which suddenly deranged them all, postponed for above a month the opening of the campaign, and, in its final result, changed the fate of Europe.

26. Death of the Emperor Joseph, and election of Charles VI. as Emperor, 16th April.

This was the death, by the small-pox, of the Emperor Joseph, which happened at Vienna on the 16th April—an event which was immediately followed by Charles, King of Spain, declaring himself a candidate for the

* *Marlborough to the Duchess*, 24th May 1711. COXE, v. 417–431.

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Imperial throne. As his pretensions required to be supported by a powerful demonstration of troops, the march of a large part of Eugene's men to the Netherlands was immediately stopped, and that prince himself was hastily recalled from Mentz, to take the command at Ratisbon, as marshal of the forces of the empire. Charles was soon after elected Emperor. Thus Marlborough was left to commence the campaign alone, which was the more to be regretted, as the preparations of Louis, during the winter, for the defence of his dominions, had been made on the most extensive scale, and Marshal Villars' lines had come to be regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of field fortification. Yet were Marlborough's forces most formidable; for, when reviewed at Orchies on the 30th April, between Lille and Douay, they were found, including Eugene's troops which had come up, to amount to one hundred and eighty-four battalions, and three hundred and sixty-four squadrons, mustering above one hundred thousand combatants.* But forty-one battalions and forty squadrons were in garrison, which reduced the effective force in the field to eighty thousand men.

27. Great lines constructed by Villars.

The great object of Louis and his generals had been to construct such a line of defences as might prevent the irruption of the enemy into the French territory, now that the interior and last line of fortresses was so nearly broken through. In pursuance of this design, Villars had, with the aid of all the most experienced

* *Eugene to Marlborough*, 23d April 1710; *Marlborough to St John*, 29th April 1710. Coxe, vi. 16. *Disp.* v. 319.

engineers in France, and at a vast expense of labour and money, constructed during the winter a series of lines and fieldworks, exceeding any thing yet seen in modern Europe in magnitude and strength, and to which the still more famous works of Torres Vedras have alone, in subsequent times, afforded a parallel. The fortifications extended from Namur on the Meuse, by a sort of irregular line, to the coast of Picardy. Running first along the marshy line of the Canche, they rested on the forts of Montreuil, Hesdin, and Trevant; while the great fortresses of Ypres, Calais, Gravelines, and St Omer, lying in their front, and still in the hands of the French, rendered any attempt to approach them both difficult and hazardous. Along the whole of this immense line, extending over so great a variety of ground, for above forty miles, every effort had been made, by joining the resources of art to the defences of nature, to render the position impregnable. The lines were not continuous, as in many places the ground was so rugged, or the obstacles of rocks, precipices, and ravines were so formidable, that it was evidently impossible to overcome them. But wherever a passage was practicable, the approaches to it were protected in the most imposing manner. If a streamlet ran along the line, it was carefully dammed up, so as to become impassable. Every morass was deepened, by stopping up its drains, or letting in the water of the larger rivers by artificial canals; redoubts were placed on the heights, so as to enfilade the plains between them; while in the open country, where no advantage of ground was to be met with,

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field-works were erected, armed with abundance of heavy cannon. To man these formidable lines, Villars had under his command one hundred and fifty-six battalions, and two hundred and twenty-seven squadrons in the field, numbering seventy thousand infantry, and twenty thousand horse. He had ninety field guns and twelve howitzers. There were, besides, thirty-five battalions and eighty squadrons detached or in the forts; and, as Eugene soon took away twelve battalions and fifty squadrons from the Allied army, the forces on the opposite sides, when they came to blows, were very nearly equal.*

28. Plan of the campaign.

Marlborough took the field on the 1st May, with eighty thousand men; and his whole force was soon grouped in and around Douay. The head-quarters of Villars were at Cambray; but, seeing the forces of his adversary thus accumulated at one point, he made a corresponding concentration, and arranged his whole disposable forces between Bouchain on the right, and Monchy Le Preux on the left. The position of the French marshal, which extended in a concave semicircle, with the fortresses covering either flank, he considered, and with reason, as beyond the reach of attack. The English general was meditating a great enterprise, which should at once deprive the enemy of all his defences, and reduce him to the necessity of fighting a decisive battle, or losing his last frontier fortresses. But he was overwhelmed with gloomy anticipations; he felt his strength sinking under his incessant and protracted fatigues, and knew

* Lediard, ii. 426. Coxe, vi. 21, 22.

well he was serving a party who, envious of his fame, were only ready to decry his achievements.* He lay, accordingly, for three weeks, waiting for his illustrious colleague, Prince Eugene, who arrived on the 23d May, in time to engage in a great celebration of the anniversary of the victory at Ramilies, which had taken place on that day.

29. Fatal separation of Eugene with his troops from Marlborough, 13th June.

The plans of the Allied generals were soon formed; and, taking advantage of the enthusiasm excited by that commemoration, and the arrival of so illustrious a warrior, preparations were made for the immediate commencement of active operations. On the 28th, the two generals reviewed the whole army. But their designs were soon interrupted by an event which changed the whole fortune of the campaign. Early in June, Eugene received positive orders to march to Germany, with a considerable part of his troops, to oppose a French force, which was moving towards the Rhine, to influence the approaching election of the Emperor. On the 13th June, Eugene and Marlborough separated, *for the last time*, with the deepest expressions of regret on both sides, and with gloomy forebodings of the future. The former marched towards the Rhine with twelve battalions and

* "I see my Lord Rochester has gone where we all must follow. I believe my journey will be hastened by the many vexations I meet with. I am sure I wish well to my country, and if I could do good, I should think no pains too great; but I find myself decay so very fast, that from my heart and soul I wish the Queen and my country a peace by which I might have the advantage of enjoying a little quiet, which is my greatest ambition." — *Marlborough to the Duchess*, 25th May 1711. COXE, vi. 28.

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fifty squadrons, while Marlborough's whole remaining force moved to the right in six divisions.*

30. Villars avoids a battle by orders of Louis.

Though Villars was relieved by the departure of Eugene from a considerable part of the force opposed to him, and he naturally felt desirous of now measuring his strength with his great antagonist in a decisive affair, yet he was restrained from hazarding a general engagement. Louis, trusting to the progress of the Tory intrigues in England, and daily expecting to see Marlborough and the war-party overthrown, sent him positive orders not to fight; and soon after detached twenty-five battalions and forty squadrons, in two divisions, to the Upper Rhine, to watch the movements of Eugene. Villars encouraged this separation, representing that the strength of his position was such, that he could afford to send a third detachment to the Upper Rhine, if it was thought proper. Marlborough, therefore, in vain offered battle, and drew up his army in the plain of Lens for that purpose. Villars cautiously remained on the defensive; and, though he threw eighteen bridges over the Scarpe, and made a show of intending to fight, he cautiously abstained from any steps which might bring on a general battle.† It was not without good reason that Louis thus enjoined his lieutenant to avoid compromising his army. The progress of the negotiations with England gave him the fairest ground for believing that he would obtain nearly all he desired, from

* *Marlborough to St John*, 14th June 1711. *Disp.* v. 428. COXE, vi. 29, 30.

† VILLARS' *Mem.* tom. ii. ann. 1711.

the favour with which he was regarded by the British cabinet, without running any risk. He had commenced a *separate* negotiation with the court of St James's, which had been favourably received; and Mr Secretary St John had already transmitted to Lord Raby, the new plenipotentiary at the Hague, a sketch of six preliminary articles proposed by the French king, which were to be the basis of a general peace.*

31. Who had begun a separate and secret negotiation with England.

The high tone of these proposals proved how largely Louis counted upon the altered dispositions of the British cabinet. The Spanish succession, the real object of the war, was evaded. Every thing was directed to British objects, and regulated by the desire to tempt the commercial cupidity of England to the abandonment of the great objects of her national policy. Real security was promised to the British commerce with Spain, the Indus, and the Mediterranean; the barrier the Dutch had so long contended for was agreed to; a reasonable satisfaction was tendered to the Allies of England and Holland; and, as to the Spanish succession, it was to be left to "new expedients to the satisfaction of all parties interested." These proposals were favourably received by the British ministry; they were in secret communicated to the Pensionary Heinsius, but concealed from the Austrian and Piedmontese plenipotentiaries; and they were *not communicated to Marlborough*, — a decisive proof both of the altered feeling of the cabinet towards that general, and of the consciousness on their

* Bolingbroke's *Corresp.* i. 172.

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part of the tortuous path on which they were now entering.*

32. Marlborough determines to pass the enemy's lines.

After much deliberation, and a due consideration of what could be effected by the diminished force still at his disposal, which, by the successive drafts to Eugene's army, was now reduced to one hundred and nineteen battalions, and two hundred and fifty-six squadrons, not mustering above seventy-five thousand combatants, Marlborough determined to break through the enemy's boasted lines; and after doing so, undertake the siege of Bouchain, the possession of which would give him a solid footing within the French frontier. With this view, he had long and minutely studied the lines of Villars; and he hoped that, even with the force at his disposal, they might be broken through. To accomplish this, however, required an extraordinary combination of stratagem and force; and the manner in which Marlborough contrived to unite them, and bring the ardent mind and lively imagination of his adversary to play into his hands, to the defeat of all the objects he had most at heart, is perhaps the most wonderful part of his whole military achievements.†

33. His project for achieving this.

During his encampment at Lewarde, opposite Villars, the English general had observed that a triangular piece of ground in front of the French position, between Cam-

* "The Duke of Marlborough has no communication from home on this affair; I suppose he will have none from the Hague."—*Mr Secretary St John to Lord Raby*, 27th April 1711. BOLINGBROKE'S *Corresp.* i. 175.

† COXE, vi. 52-54.

bray, Aubanchocil-au-bac, and the junction of the Sauzet and Scheldt, offered a position so strong, that a small body of men might defend it against a very considerable force. He resolved to make the occupation of this inconsiderable piece of ground the pivot on which the whole passage of the lines should be effected. A redoubt at Aubigny, which commanded the approach to this position, was first carried without difficulty. Arleux, which also was fortified, was next attacked by seven hundred men, who issued from Douay in the night. That post also was taken, with one hundred and twenty prisoners. Marlborough instantly used all imaginable expedition in strengthening it; and Villars, jealous of a fortified post so close to his lines remaining in the hands of the Allies, attacked it in the night of the 9th July; and, though he failed in retaking the work, he surprised the Allies at that point, and made two hundred men and four hundred horses prisoners. Though much chagrined at the success of this nocturnal attack, the English general now saw his designs advancing to maturity. He therefore left Arleux to its own resources, and marched towards Bethune. That fort was immediately attacked by Marshal Montesquieu, and, after a stout resistance, carried by the French, who made the garrison, five hundred strong, prisoners. Villars immediately razed Arleux to the ground, and withdrew his troops; while Marlborough, who was in hopes the lure of these successes would induce Villars to hazard a general engagement, shut himself up in his tent, and appeared to be

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overwhelmed with mortification at the checks he had received.*

34. Preparations for executing it, and deceiving the enemy, 4th August.

Villars was so much elated with these successes, and the accounts he received of Marlborough's chagrin, that he wrote to the King of France a vainglorious letter, in which he boasted that he had at length brought his antagonist to a *ne plus ultra*. Meanwhile, Marlborough sent off his heavy baggage to Douay; despatched his artillery under a proper guard to the rear; and, with all imaginable secrecy, obtained supplies of bread for the whole troops for six days. Thus disencumbered and prepared, he broke up at four in the morning on the 1st of August, and marched in eight columns towards the front. During the three following days, the troops were kept collected, and menacing sometimes one part of the French lines and sometimes another, so as to leave the real point of attack in a state of uncertainty. Seriously alarmed, Villars concentrated his whole force opposite the Allies, and drew in all his detachments, evacuating even Aubigny and Arleux, the object of so much eager contention some days before. On the evening of the 4th, Marlborough, affecting great chagrin at the check he had received, spoke openly to those around him of his intention of avenging them by a general action, and pointed to the direction the attacking columns were to take. He then returned to the camp, and gave orders to prepare for battle. Gloom hung on every countenance of those around him; it appeared

* KANE's *Memoirs*, p. 89. COXE, vi. 53-55; *Disp.* v. 421-428.

nothing short of an act of madness to attack an enemy superior in number, and strongly posted in a camp surrounded with intrenchments, and bristling with cannon. They ascribed it to desperation, produced by the mortifications received from the government, and feared that, by one rash act, he would lose the fruit of all his victories. Proportionally great was the joy in the French camp, when the men, never doubting they were on the eve of a glorious victory, spent the night in the exultation which, in that excitable people, has so often been the prelude to disaster.*

35. He passes the lines with entire success.

Having brought the feeling of both armies to this point, and produced a concentration of Villars' army directly in his front, Marlborough, at dusk on the 4th, ordered the drums to beat; and before the roll had ceased, directions were given for the tents to be struck. Meanwhile Cadogan secretly left the camp, and met twenty-three battalions and seventeen squadrons, drawn from the garrisons of Lille and Tournay, and other towns in the rear, which instantly marched; and continuing to advance all night, they passed the lines rapidly to the left, at Arleux, and without opposition, at break of day. A little before nine, the Allied main army began to defile rapidly to the left, through the woods of Villers and Neuville—Marlborough himself leading the van, at the head of fifty squadrons. With such expedition did they march, still holding steadily on to the left, that

* KANE'S *Memoirs*, p. 92. *Marlborough to Mr Secretary St John*, 6th August 1711.—*Disp.* v. 428.

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before five in the morning of the 5th they reached Vitry on the Scarpe, where they found pontoons ready for their passage, and a considerable train of field artillery. At the same time, the English general received the welcome intelligence of Cadogan's success. He instantly despatched orders to every man and horse to press forward without delay. Such was the ardour of the troops, who all saw the brilliant manœuvre by which they had outwitted the enemy, and rendered all their labour abortive, that they marched *sixteen hours* without once halting; and by ten next morning, the whole had passed the enemy's lines without opposition, and without firing a shot.*

36. Extraordinary success thus gained.

Villars received intelligence of the night-march having begun at eleven at night; but so utterly was he in the dark as to the plan his opponent was pursuing, that he came up to Verger, when Marlborough had drawn up his army on the *inner* side of the lines in order of battle, attended only by a hundred dragoons, and narrowly escaped being made prisoner. Altogether, the Allied troops marched thirty-six miles in sixteen hours, the most part of them in the dark, and crossed several rivers, without either falling into confusion or sustaining any loss. The annals of war scarcely afford an example of such a success being gained in so bloodless a manner. The famous French lines, which Villars boasted would form the *ne plus ultra* of Marlborough, had been passed without losing a man; the labour of

* COXE, vi. 60–63. KANE, 96–99. MARL. *Disp.* v. 428.

nine months was at once rendered of no avail; and the French army, in deep dejection, had no alternative but to retire under the cannon of Cambray.*

37. Commencement of the siege of Bouchain, 8th August.

This great success at once restored the lustre of Marlborough's reputation, and for a short season put to silence his detractors. Eugene, with the generosity which formed so striking a feature in his character, wrote to congratulate him on his achievement;† and even Bolingbroke admitted that this bloodless triumph rivalled his greatest achievements.‡ Marlborough immediately commenced the siege of Bouchain; but this was an enterprise of no small difficulty, as it was to be accomplished on very difficult ground, in presence of an army superior in force. The investment was formed on the very day after the lines had been passed, and an important piece of ground occupied, which might have enabled Villars to communicate with the

* *Marlborough to Mr Secretary St John*, 6th August 1711. *Disp.* v. 428. COXE, vi. 60–65. KANE's *Mil. Mem.* 96–99.

† "No person takes a greater interest in your concerns than myself; your highness has penetrated into the *ne plus ultra*. I hope the siege of Bouchain will not last long." — *Eugene to Marlborough*, 17th August 1771. COXE, vi. 66.

‡ "My Lord Stair opened to us the general steps which your grace intended to take, in order to pass the lines in one part or another. It was, however, hard to imagine, and too much to hope, that a plan, which consisted of so many parts, wherein so many different corps were to co-operate personally together, should entirely succeed, and no one article fail of what your grace had projected. I most heartily congratulate your grace on this great event, of which I think no more needs be said, than that you have obtained, without losing a man, such an advantage as we should have been glad to have purchased with the loss of several thousand lives." — *Mr Secretary St John to Marlborough*, 31st July 1711. *Disp.* v. 429.

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town, and regain the defensible position. On the morning of the 8th August a bridge was thrown over the Scheldt at Neuville, and sixty squadrons passed over, which barred the road from Douay. Villars upon this threw thirty battalions across the Senzet, and made himself master of a hill above, on which he began to erect works, which would have kept open his communications with the town on its southern front. Marlborough at once saw this design, and at first determined to storm the works ere they were completed; and, with this view, General Fagel, with a strong body of troops, was secretly passed over the river. But Villars having heard of the design, attacked the Allied posts at Ivry with such vigour, that Marlborough was obliged to countermarch in haste, to be at hand to support them. Baffled in this attempt, Marlborough erected a chain of works on the right bank of the Scheldt, from Houdain, through Ivry, to the Sette, near Haspres, while Cadogan strengthened himself with similar works on the left. Villars, however, still retained the fortified position which has been mentioned, and which kept up his communication with the town; and the cutting him off from this was another, and the last, of Marlborough's brilliant field operations.*

38. Interesting operations on both sides during its progress.

Notwithstanding all the diligence with which Villars laboured to strengthen his men on this important position, he could not equal the activity with which the English general strove to supplant them. During the

* *Marlborough to Secretary St John*, 10th August 1711. *Disp.* v. 437.

night of the 13th three redoubts were marked out, which would have completed the French marshal's communication with the town. But on the morning of the 14th they were all stormed by a large body of the Allied troops before the works could be armed. That very day the Allies carried their zig-zag down to the very edge of a morass which adjoined Bouchain on the south, so as to command a causeway through the marshes, from that town to Cambray, which the French still held, communicating with the besieged town. But, to complete the investment, it was necessary to win this causeway; and this last object was gained by Marlborough with equal daring and success. A battery, commanding the road, had been placed by Villars in a redoubt garrisoned by six hundred men, supported by three thousand more close in their rear. Marlborough, with incredible labour and diligence, constructed two roads, made of fascines, through part of the marsh, so as to render it passable to foot soldiers; and, on the night of the 16th, six hundred chosen grenadiers were sent across them to attack the intrenched battery. They rapidly advanced in the dark till the fascine path ended, and then boldly plunging into the marsh, struggled on, with the water often up to their arm-pits, till they reached the foot of the intrenchment, into which they rushed, without firing a shot, with fixed bayonets. So complete was the surprise, that the enemy were driven from their guns with the loss only of six men; the work was carried; and with such diligence were its defences strengthened,

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that before morning it was in a condition to bid defiance to any attack.*

39. Fall of Bouchain, Sept. 12.

Villars was now effectually cut off from Bouchain, and the operations of the siege were conducted with the utmost vigour. On the night of the 21st, the trenches were opened; three separate attacks were pushed at the same time against the eastern, western, and southern faces of the town, and a huge train of heavy guns and mortars thundered upon the works without intermission. The progress of the operations, notwithstanding a vigorous defence by the besieged, was unusually rapid. As fast as the outworks were breached they were stormed; and repeated attempts on the part of Villars to raise the siege were baffled by the skilful disposition and strong ground taken by Marlborough with the covering army. At length, on the 12th September, as the counterscarp was blown down, the rampart breached, and an assault of the fortress in preparation, the governor agreed to capitulate; and the garrison, still three thousand strong, marched out upon the glacis, laid down their arms, and were conducted prisoners to Tournay.† The two armies then remained in their respective positions, the French under the cannon of Cambray, the Allied in the middle of their lines, resting on Bouchain. Marlborough here

* Coxe, vi. 71–80. *Marlborough to Mr Secretary St John*, 14th, 17th, and 20th August 1711. *Disp.* v. 445–450–453.

† *Marlborough to Mr Secretary St John*, 14th Sept. 1711. *Disp.* v. 490. Coxe, vi. 78–88.

gave proof of the courtesy of his disposition, as well as of his respect for exalted learning and piety, by planting a detachment of his troops to protect the estates of Fenelon, archbishop of Cambray, and to conduct the grain from thence to the dwelling of the illustrious prelate in the town, which now began to be straitened for provisions.*

40. Ostensible preparations for war, and real secret negotiations for peace, by the Ministry, 27th Sept.

After the reduction of Bouchain, Marlborough was anxious to commence without delay the siege of Quesnoy, the capture of which would, in that quarter, have entirely broken through the French barrier. He vigorously stimulated his own government accordingly, as well as that at the Hague, to prepare the necessary supplies and magazines, and expressed a sanguine hope that the capture of this last stronghold would be the means of bringing about the grand object of his ambition, a general peace.† The ministry, to appearance, went with alacrity into his projects, and every thing seemed to promise another great success, closing the campaign with honour, and probably leading to a glorious and lasting peace. Mr Secretary St John, in particular, wrote in the warmest style of cordiality, approving the project in his own name as well as in that of the Queen,

* *Victoires de Marlborough*, iii. 22. COXE, vi. 87.

† "The siege, so far as it depends on me, shall be pushed with all possible vigour, and I do not altogether despair but that, from the success of this campaign, we may hear of some advances made towards that which we so much desire. And I shall esteem it much the happiest part of my life, if I can be instrumental in putting a good end to the war, which grows so burdensome to our country, as well as to our allies."—*Marlborough to Lord Oxford*, Aug. 20, 1711. COXE, vi. 92.

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and reiterating the assurances that the strongest representations had been made to the Dutch, with a view to their hearty concurrence. But all this was a mere cover to conceal what the Tories had really been doing to overturn Marlborough, and abandon the main objects of the war. Unknown to him, the secret negotiation with the French Cabinet, through Torcy and the British ministers, by the agency of Mesnager, had been making rapid progress. No representations about providing supplies were made to the Dutch, who were fully in the secret of the pending negotiation; and on the 27th September, preliminaries of peace, on the basis of the seven articles proposed by Louis, were signed by Mesnager on the part of France, and by the two English secretaries of state, in virtue of a special warrant from the Queen.*

41. Conditions of the preliminaries which were agreed to.

The conditions of these preliminaries, which were afterwards embodied in the Treaty of Utrecht, were the acknowledgment of the Queen's title to the throne, and of the Protestant succession, by Louis; an engagement to take all just and reasonable measures that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united on the same head; the providing a sufficient barrier to the Dutch, the empire, and the house of Austria; and the demolition of Dunkirk, on a proper equivalent. But the crown of Spain was left to the Duke of Anjou, and no provision whatever was made to exclude a Bourbon prince from succeeding to it. Thus the main object of the contest — the exclusion of the Bourbon family from the throne of Spain—was abandoned: and at the

* Coxe, vi. 93.

close of the most important, successful, and glorious war ever waged by England, terms were agreed to which left to France advantages which could scarcely have been hoped by the Cabinet of Versailles as the fruit of a long series of victories.

42. Marlborough returns home deeply hurt at this clandestine accommodation.

Marlborough felt deeply chagrined at this clandestine negotiation, which not only deprived him of the main object for which, during his great career, he had been contending, but evinced a duplicity and want of confidence on the part of his own government at its close, which was a melancholy return for such inestimable public services.* But it was of no avail; the secession of England proved, as he had foreseen from the outset, a death-blow to the confederacy. Finding that nothing more was to be done, either at the head of the army, or in directing the negotiations, he returned home by the Brille, after putting his army into winter quarters, and landed at Greenwich on the 17th November. Though well aware of the private envy, as well as political hostility of which he was the object, he did nothing that could lower or compromise his high character and lofty position; but in an interview with the Queen, fully expressed his opinion on the impolicy of

* "As you have given me encouragement to enter into the strictest confidence with you, I beg your friendly advice in what manner I am to conduct myself. You cannot but imagine it would be a terrible mortification for me to pass by the Hague when our plenipotentiaries are there, and myself a stranger to their transactions; and what hopes can I have of any countenance at home if I am not thought fit to be trusted abroad?"—*Marlborough to the Lord Treasurer*, 21st Oct. 1711.

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the course which her ministers were now adopting.* He adopted the same manly course in the noble speech which he made in his place in parliament, on the debate on the address. Ministers had put into the royal speech the unworthy expression,—"I am glad to tell you, that notwithstanding *the arts of those who delight in war*, both place and time are appointed for opening the treaty of a general peace." Lord Anglesea followed this up by declaring, in the course of the debate, that the country might have enjoyed the blessing of peace soon after the battle of Ramilies, "if it had not been deferred by some person whose interest it was to prolong the war."

43. Marlborough's noble speech against it in the House of Peers, 10th Dec. 1711.

Rising upon this, with inexpressible dignity, and turning to where the Queen sat, Marlborough said, "I appeal to the Queen, whether I did not constantly, while I was plenipotentiary, give her Majesty and her Council an account of all the propositions which were made; and whether I did not desire instruction for my conduct on this subject. I can declare with a good conscience, in the presence of her Majesty, of this illustrious assembly, and of God himself, who is infinitely superior to all the powers of the earth, and before whom, by the ordinary course of nature, I shall soon appear to render account of my actions, that I was very desirous of a safe, honourable, and lasting peace, and

* "I hear that, in his conversation with the Queen, the Duke of Marlborough has spoken against what we are doing; in short, his fate hangs heavy upon him, and he has of late pursued every counsel which was worst for him."—*Bolingbroke's Letters*, i. 480. Nov. 24, 1711.

was very far from wishing to prolong the war for my own private advantage, as several libels and discourses have most falsely insinuated. My great age, and my numerous fatigues in war, make me ardently wish for the power to enjoy a quiet repose, in order to think of eternity. As to other matters, I have not the least inducement, on any account, to desire the continuance of the war for my own interest, since my services have been so generously rewarded by her Majesty and her parliament; but I think myself obliged to make such an acknowledgment to her Majesty and my country, that I am always ready to serve them, whenever my duty may require, to obtain an honourable and lasting peace. Yet I can by no means acquiesce in the measures that have been taken to enter into a negotiation of peace with France, upon the foot of some pretended preliminaries, which are now circulated; since my opinion is the same as that of most of the Allies, that *to leave Spain and the West Indies to the House of Bourbon, will be the entire ruin of Europe*, which I have with all fidelity and humility declared to her Majesty, when I had the honour to wait upon her after my arrival from Holland."*

This manly declaration, delivered in the most emphatic manner, produced a great impression; a resolution against ministers, and an address embodying these sentiments were carried in the House of Peers by a majority of twelve. To this address the Queen replied,

44. Resolution carried against Ministers in the Peers.

* *Parl. Hist.*, 10th December 1711.

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"I take your thanks kindly, but should *be sorry that any one should think I would not do my utmost to recover Spain and the West Indies from the House of Bourbon.*" In the Commons, however, they had a large majority, and an address containing expressions similar to those used by Lord Anglesea, reflecting on Marlborough, was introduced and carried.

45. Counter address carried in the Commons, and irresolution of the Queen.

The Whig majority, however, continued firm in the Upper House; and the leaders of that party began to entertain sanguine hopes of success. The Queen had let fall some peevish expressions in regard to her ministers. She had given her hand, in retiring from the House of Peers on the 15th December, to the Duke of Somerset, instead of her own Lord Treasurer; it was apprehended that her old partiality for Marlborough was about to return; Mrs Masham was in the greatest alarm; and St John declared to Swift that the Queen was false.* The ministers of the whole Alliance seconded the efforts of the Whigs, and strongly represented the injurious effects which would ensue to the cause of European independence in general, and the interests of England in particular, if the preliminaries which had been agreed to should be made the basis of a general peace. The Dutch made strong and repeated representations on the subject, and the Elector of Hanover

* SWIFT'S *Journal to Stella*, Dec. 8, 1711. — Swift said to the Lord Treasurer, in his usual ironical style, "If there is no remedy, your lordship will lose your head; but I shall only be hung, and so carry my body entire to the grave."—COXE, vi. 148–157.

delivered a memorial strongly urging the danger which would ensue if Spain and the Indies were allowed to remain in the hands of a Bourbon prince.

46. The Tories dismiss Marlborough, charge him with peculation, and swamp the House of Peers, 31st December.

Deeming themselves pushed to extremities, and having failed in all attempts to detach Marlborough from the Whigs, Bolingbroke and the ministers resolved on the desperate measure of bringing forward an accusation against him, of fraud and peculation in the management of the public moneys intrusted to his management in the Flemish campaign. The charges were founded on the report of certain commissioners to whom the matter had been remitted; and which charged the Duke with having appropriated £63,319 of the public moneys destined for the use of the English troops, and £282,366, as a per centage of two per cent. on the sum paid to foreign ambassadors during the ten years of the war. In reply to these abominable insinuations, the letter of the Duke to the commissioners was published on the 27th December, in which he entirely refuted the charges, and showed that he had never received any sums or perquisites not sanctioned by previous and uniform usage, and far fewer than had been received by the general in the reign of William III. And in regard to the £282,000 of per centage on foreign subsidies, this was proved to have been a voluntary gift from those powers to the English general, authorised by their signatures and sanctioned by warrants from the Queen. This answer made a great impression; but ministers had gone too far to retreat, and they ventured on a step which, for the honour of the

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country, has never, even in the worst times, been since repeated. Trusting to their majority in the Commons, they dismissed the Duke from all his situations on the 31st December, and in order to stifle the voice of justice in the Upper House, on the following day patents were issued calling *twelve* new peers to the Upper House. On the following day they were introduced amidst the groans of the House: the Whig noblemen, says a contemporary annalist, "casting their eyes on the ground as if they had been invited to the funeral of the peerage." *

47. Universal joy among the enemies of England, and generous conduct of Eugene.

Unbounded was the joy diffused among the enemies of England by these unparalleled measures. On hearing of Marlborough's fall, Louis XIV. said with triumph, "The dismission of Marlborough will do all we can desire." The court of St Germains was in exultation; and the general joy of the Jacobites, both at home and abroad, was sufficient to demonstrate how formidable an enemy to their cause they regarded the Duke; and how destitute of truth are the attempts to show that he had been engaged in a secret design to restore the exiled family. Marlborough disdained to make any defence of himself in parliament; but an able answer on his part was prepared and circulated, which entirely refuted the whole charges against the illustrious general. So convinced were ministers of this, that, contenting themselves with resolutions against him in the House of Commons, where their influence was predominant, they declined to prefer any impeachment or

* CUNNINGHAM, ii. 367.

accusation in the Upper House, swamped even as it was by their recent creations. In the midst of this disgraceful scene of passion, envy, and ingratitude, Prince Eugene arrived in London for the purpose of trying to stem the torrent, and, if possible, prevent the secession of England from the confederacy. He was lodged with the Lord Treasurer, and the generous Prince omitted no opportunity of testifying, in the day of his tribulation, his undiminished respect for his illustrious rival. The Treasurer having said to him at a great dinner, "I consider this day as the happiest of my life, since I have the honour to see in my house the greatest captain of the age."—"If it be so," replied Eugene, "I owe it to your lordship;" alluding to his dismissal of Marlborough, which had caused him to cease to be one. On another occasion, some one having pointed out a passage in one of the libels against Marlborough, in which he was said to have been "perhaps *once* fortunate." "It is true," said Eugene, "he was *once* fortunate; and it is the greatest praise which can be bestowed on him; for, as he was *always* successful — that implies that all his other successes were owing to his own conduct." *

48. Machinations of the Tories to inflame the Queen against Marlborough.

Alarmed at the weight which Marlborough might derive from the presence and support of so great a commander, and the natural sympathy of all generous minds at the cordial admiration which these two great men entertained for each other, the ministers had recourse to a pretended conspiracy, which it was alleged

* Burnet's *History of his Own Times*, vi. 116.

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had been discovered, on the part of Marlborough and Eugene, to seize the government and dethrone the Queen, on the 17th November. St John and Oxford had too much sense to publish such a ridiculous statement; but it was made the subject of several secret examinations before the Privy Council, in order to augment the apprehensions and secure the concurrence of the Queen in their measures. Such as it was, the tale was treated as a mere malicious invention, even by the contemporary foreign annalists,* though it has since been repeated as true by more than one party historian of our own country.† This ridiculous calumny, and the atrocious libels as to the embezzlement of the public money, however, produced the desired effect. They inflamed the mind of the Queen, and removed that vacillation in regard to the measures of government, from which so much danger had been apprehended by the Tory administration. Having answered the desired end, they were allowed quietly to go to sleep. No proceedings in the House of Peers, or elsewhere, followed the resolutions of the Commons condemnatory of Marlborough's financial administration in the Low Countries. His defence, published in the newspapers, though abundantly vigorous, was neither answered nor prosecuted as a libel on the commissioners or House of Commons; and the alleged Stuart

* *Mém. De Torcy*, iii. 268, 269.

† SWIFT's *Four Last Years of Queen Anne*, 59; *Continuation of* RAPIN, xviii. 468, 8vo edit.

conspiracy was never more heard of, till it was long after drawn from its slumber by the malice of English party spirit.

49. Louis rises in his demands at Utrecht, which turns into a private treaty between France and England.

Meanwhile the negotiations at Utrecht for a general peace continued, and St John and Oxford soon found themselves embarrassed by the extravagant pretensions which their own favour had revived in the plenipotentiaries of Louis. So great was the general indignation excited by the publication of the preliminaries at Utrecht, that St John felt the necessity of discontinuing any general negotiation, and converting it into a private correspondence between the plenipotentiaries of the English and French crowns.* Great difficulty was experienced in coming to an accommodation, in consequence of the rising demands of the French plenipotentiaries, who, deeming themselves secure of support from the English ministry, not only positively refused to abandon Spain and the Indies, but now demanded the Netherlands for the Elector of Bavaria, and the cession of Lille and Tournay in return for the seizure of Dunkirk. The sudden death, however, first of the Dauphiness of France, and then of the Dauphin, the former of whom was carried off by a malignant fever on the 12th, the latter on the 18th February 1712, followed by the death of their eldest son on the 23d, produced feelings of commiseration for the aged monarch, now in his seventy-

* "The French will see that there is a possibility of reviving the love of war in our people, by the indignation that has been expressed at the plan given in at Utrecht." — *Mr Secretary St John to Brit. Plenip.*, Dec. 28, 1711. BOLINGBROKE'S *Corresp.* ii. 93.

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third year, and broken down by misfortunes, which rendered the progress of the separate negotiations more easy. England agreed to abandon its Allies, and the main object of the war, on condition that a guarantee should be obtained against the crowns of France and Spain being united on the same head. On this frail security, and the promised demolition of Dunkirk, the English ministry agreed to withdraw their contingent from the Allied army; and to induce the Dutch to follow their example, Ypres was offered to them on the same terms as Dunkirk had been to Great Britain.* So overjoyed was Louis at the signing of these conditions, on the part of Bolingbroke, that he immediately sent Queen Anne a present of six splendid dresses, and *two thousand five hundred bottles of champagne.*†

50. Forces of the Allies and French in Flanders, and desperate situation of Louis.

The disastrous effects of this secret and dishonourable secession, on the part of England, from the confederacy, were soon apparent. Great had been the preparations of the continental Allies for continuing the contest; and while the English contingent remained with them, their force was irresistible. Prince Eugene was at the head of the army in Flanders, and, including the British forces under the Duke of Ormond, it amounted to the immense force of 122,000 effective men, with 120 guns, sixteen howitzers, and an ample pontoon train. To oppose this, by far the largest army the French had yet had to confront in the Low Countries, Villars had scarcely at his command 100,000 men, and they were ill equipped,

* Coxe, vi. 189, 194. † Capefigue, Louis XIV., vi. 249.

imperfectly supplied with artillery, and grievously depressed in spirit by a long series of disasters. Eugene commanded the forces of the confederates; for although the English ministry had been lavish in their promises of unqualified support, the Dutch had begun to entertain serious suspicions of their sincerity, and bestowed the command on that tried officer instead of the Duke of Ormond, who had succeeded Marlborough in the command of the English contingent. But Marlborough's soul still directed the movements of the army; and Eugene's plan of the campaign was precisely that which that great commander had chalked out at the close of the preceding one. This was to besiege Quesnoy and Landrecies, *the last* of those fortresses forming the iron barrier of France which in this quarter protected the frontier, and immediately after to inundate the open country and advance as rapidly as possible to Paris. It was calculated they might reach it in *ten* marches from Landrecies; and it was well known that there was neither a defensible position nor fortress of any sort to arrest the invaders' march. Already the light horse had overspread the country as far as the Oise, within forty miles of Paris, and a plan had even been formed for surprising the King in his palace of Versailles, by a body of hussars, which had very nearly succeeded.* The court of Versailles was in

* La Scarpe une fois passée, toute la province de Picardie fut couverte de partisans ennemies; on vit des hussards Allemands sur les bords de l'Oise, des hardis cavaliers vinrent même à quelquis lieues de Versailles pour effrayer le vieux Monarque, dans son palais de Versailles, plein de grandeur et de merveilles.—CAPEFIGUE, *Louis XIV.* vi. 147, 148.

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despair; the general opinion was, that the King should leave Paris, and retire to Blois; and although the proud spirit of Louis recoiled at such a proposal, yet, in taking leave of Marshal Villars, he declared—"Should a disaster occur, I will go to Peronne or St Quentin, collect all my troops, and with you risk a last effort, determined to perish or save the state."*

51. The defection of Britain saves France, May 10.

But the French monarch was spared this last desperate alternative. The defection of the British Cabinet saved his throne, when all his means of defence were exhausted. Eugene, on opening the campaign on the 1st May, anxiously inquired of the Duke of Ormond whether he had authority to act vigorously in the campaign, and received an answer that he had the same authority as the Duke of Marlborough, and was prepared to join in attacking the enemy. Preparations were immediately made for forcing the enemy's lines, which covered Quesnoy, previous to an attack on that fortress. But at the very time that this was going on, the work of perfidious defection was consummated. On May 10, Mr Secretary St John sent positive orders to Ormond to take no part in any general engagement, as the questions at issue between the contending parties were on the point of adjustment.† Intimation of this private

* *Mém. de Villars*, ii. 197.

† "Her Majesty, my Lord, has reason to believe that we shall come to an agreement upon the great article of the union of the monarchies, as soon as a courier sent from Versailles to Madrid can return. It is, therefore, the Queen's *positive command* to your Grace that *you avoid engaging in any siege, or hazarding a battle*, till you have further orders from her Majesty. I am, at the same time,

order was sent to the court of France, but it was directed to be kept a positive secret from the Allied generals. Ormond, upon the receipt of these orders, opened a private correspondence with Villars, informing him that their troops were no longer enemies, and that the future movements of the forces under his command would only be to get forage and provisions.

This correspondence was unknown to Eugene; but circumstances soon brought the defection of England to light. In the middle of it, the Allied forces had passed the Scheldt, and taken post between Noyeller and the Boiase, close to Villars' position. To bring the sincerity of the English to a test, Eugene proposed a general attack on the enemy's line, which was open and exposed, on the 28th May. *But Ormond declined*, requesting the operation might be delayed for a few days. The defection was now apparent, and the Dutch deputies loudly condemned such dishonourable conduct; but Eugene, anxious to make the most of the presence of the British troops, though their co-operation could no longer be relied on, proposed to besiege Quesnoy, which was laid open by Villars' retreat. Ormond, who felt acutely the painful and discreditable situation in which, without

52. Siege and capture of Quesnoy, July 16.

directed to let your Grace know, that you are *to disguise the receipt of this order;* and her Majesty thinks you cannot want pretences for conducting yourself, without owning that which might at present have an ill effect if it was publicly known.—*P.S.* I had almost forgot to tell your Grace that communication is made of this order *to the Court of France*, so that if the Marshal de Villars takes, in any private way, notice of it to you, your Grace will answer it accordingly."—*Mr Secretary St John to the Duke of Ormond*, May 10, 1712. BOLINGBROKE'S *Correspondence*, ii. 320.

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any fault of his own, he was placed, could not refuse, and the investment took place that very day. The operations were conducted by *the Dutch and Imperial troops alone;* and the town was taken, after a siege of six weeks, on the 16th July.*

53. Universal indignation which this excites in the Allied powers.

This disgraceful defection on the part of the English government excited, as well it might, the utmost indignation among the Allies, and produced mingled feelings of shame and mortification among all real patriots or men of honour in this country. By abandoning the contest in this manner, when it was on the very point of being crowned with success, the English lost the fruit of TEN costly and bloody campaigns, and suffered the war to terminate without attaining the main object for which it had been undertaken. Louis XIV., defeated, and all but ruined, was permitted to retain for his grandson the Spanish succession; and England, victorious and within sight, as it were, of Paris, was content to halt in the career of victory, and lost the opportunity, never to be regained for a century to come, of permanently restraining the ambition of France. It was the same as if, a few days after the battle of Waterloo, England had concluded a separate peace, guaranteeing the throne of Spain to Joseph Buonaparte, and providing only for its not being held also by the Emperor of France.

Lord Halifax gave vent to the general indignation of all generous and patriotic men, when he said, in the debate on the address, on 28th May, after enumerating

* *Eugene to Marlborough*, June 9, 1712. COXE, vi. 199.

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54. Eloquent speech of Lord Halifax against the Peace in the House of Peers.

the proud list of victories which, since the commencement of the war, had attended the arms of England,— "But all this pleasing prospect is totally effaced by the orders given to the Queen's general, not to act offensively against the enemy. I pity that heroic and gallant general, who, on other occasions, took delight to charge the most formidable corps and strongest squadrons, and cannot but be uneasy at his being fettered with shackles, and thereby prevented from reaping the glory which he might well expect from leading on troops so long accustomed to conquer. I pity the Allies, who have relied upon the aid and friendship of the British nation, perceiving that what they had done at so great an expense of blood and treasure is of no effect, as they will be exposed to the revenge of that power against whom they have been so active. I pity the Queen, her royal successors, and the present and future generations of Britain, when they shall find the nation deeply involved in debt, and that the common enemy who occasioned it, though once near being sufficiently humbled, does still triumph, and design their ruin; and are informed that this proceeds from the conduct of the British Cabinet, in neglecting to make a right use of those advantages and happy occasions which their own courage and God's blessing had put into their hands." *

Marlborough seconded the motion of Halifax in a speech of peculiar interest, as the last which he made on the conduct of this eventful war. "Although," said

* *Parl. Hist.* May 28, 1712. *Lockhart Papers*, i. 392.

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55. Marlborough's speech in seconding the motion of Halifax.

he, "the negotiations for peace may be far advanced, yet I can see no reason which should induce the Allies or ourselves to remain inactive, and not push on the war with the utmost vigour, as we have incurred the expense of recruiting the army for the service of another year. That army is now in the field; and it has often occurred that a victory or a siege produced good effects and manifold advantages, when treaties were still further advanced than in the present negotiation. And as I am of opinion that we should make the most we can for ourselves, the only infallible way to force France to an entire submission, is to besiege and occupy Cambray or Arras, and to carry the war into the heart of the kingdom. But as the troops of the enemy are now encamped, it is impossible to execute that design, unless they are withdrawn from their position; and as they cannot be reduced to retire from want of provisions, they must be attacked and forced. For the truth of what I say, I appeal to a noble duke (Argyll,) whom I rejoice to see in this house, because he knows the country, and is as good a judge of these matters as any person now alive." Argyll, though a bitter personal enemy of Marlborough, thus appealed to, said,—"I do indeed know that country, and the situation of the enemy in their present camp, and I agree with the noble duke, that it is impossible to remove them without attacking and driving them away; and, until that is effected, neither of the two sieges alluded to can be undertaken. I likewise agree that the capture of these two towns is the most effectual

way to carry on the war with advantage, and would be a fatal blow to France."*

56. The Ministers falsely declare the Allies to be parties to the negotiation.

Notwithstanding the creation of twelve peers to swamp the Upper House, it is doubtful how the division would have gone, had not Lord Strafford, a cabinet minister, observed, in reply to the charge, that the British government was about to conclude a separate peace,—"Nothing of that nature has ever been intended; for such a peace would be so *foolish, villanous, and knavish,* that every servant of the Queen must answer for it, with his head, to the nation. The Allies *are acquainted with our proceedings, and satisfied with our terms.*" This statement was made by a British minister, in his place in parliament, on the 28th May, eighteen days *after* the private letter had been despatched from Mr Secretary St John to the Duke of Ormond, already quoted, mentioning the private treaty with Louis, enjoining him to keep it secret from the Allies, and communicate clandestinely with Villars. But such a declaration, coming from an accredited minister of the crown, produced a great impression, and ministers prevailed by a majority of sixty-eight to forty. In the course of the debate, Earl Poulett let fall such cutting expressions against Marlborough for having, as he alleged, led his troops to certain destruction, in order to profit by the sale of the officers' commissions,† that

* Coxe, vi. 192, 193.

† "No one can doubt the Duke of Ormond's bravery; but he is not like a certain general who led troops to the slaughter, to cause a great number of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his pockets by the sale of their commissions."—Coxe, vi. 196.

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the Duke, without deigning a reply, sent him a challenge on leaving the house. The agitation, however, of the Earl, who was less cool than the iron veteran in the prospect of such a meeting, revealed what was going forward, and, by an order from the Queen, the affair was terminated without bloodshed.*

57. Conditions of the treaty of Utrecht, 6th June.

It soon appeared what foundation there was for the assertion of the Queen's ministers, that England was engaged in no separate negotiation for a peace. On the 6th June, the outlines of the treaty, which afterwards became so famous as the PEACE OF UTRECHT, were divulged. The Duke of Anjou was to renounce for ever, for himself and his descendants, all claim to the French crown; and the crown of Spain was to descend, by *the male line* only, to the Duke of Anjou, and failing them to certain princes of the Bourbon line by *male* descent, always excluding him who was possessed of the French crown.† Gibraltar and Minorca remained to

* *Lockhart Papers*, i. 392. COXE, vi. 196–199.

† The words of the treaty, which subsequent events have rendered of importance on this point, were these :—Philippe V. King of Spain renounced "à toutes pretentions, droits, et titres que, lui et sa postérité avaient ou pourraient avoir à l'avenir à la couronne de France. Il consentit pour lui et sa postérité que ce droit fût tenu et considéré comme passé au Duc de Berry son frère et à ses descendants et postérité *male* et au defaut de ce Prince; et de sa postérité *male*, au Duc de Bourbon son cousin et *à ses héritiers*, et aussi successivement à tous les princes du sang de France." The Duke of Saxony and his *male* heirs were called to the succession, failing Philippe V. and his male heirs. This act of renunciation and entail of the crown of Spain on *male* heirs, was ratified by the Cortes of Castile and Arragon; by the parliament of Paris, by Great Britain and France in the sixth article of the Treaty of Utrecht.— *Vide* SCHOELL, *Hist. de Trait.*, ii. 99–105, and DUMONT, *Corp. Dipl.*, tom. viii. p. 1. p. 339.

England; Dunkirk was to be demolished; the Spanish Netherlands were to be ceded to Austria, with Naples, Milan, and Sardinia; the barrier towns were to be ceded to the Dutch, as required in 1709, with the exception of two or three places. Spain and her Indian colonies remained with the Duke of Anjou and his male heirs, as King of Spain. And thus, at the conclusion of the most glorious and successful war recorded in English history, did the English Cabinet leave to France the great object of the contest, —the crown of Spain placed on the head of a prince of the Bourbon race, and of its magnificent Indian colonies. With truth did Marlborough observe, in the debate on the preliminaries—"The measures pursued in England for the last year are directly contrary to her majesty's engagements with the Allies, sully the triumphs and glories of her reign, and will render the English name odious to all other nations."* It was all in vain. The people loudly clamoured for peace; the cry against the taxes was irresistible. The Tory ministry was seconded by a vast numerical majority throughout the country. The peace was approved of by large majorities in both houses. Parliament was soon after prorogued; and Marlborough, seeing his public career terminated, solicited and obtained passports to go abroad, which he soon afterwards did.

58. Mournful separation of the English contingent from the Allies.

Great was the mourning, and loud the lamentations, both in the British and Allied troops, when the fatal day arrived that the former were to separate from their old companions in arms. On the 16th July, the very day on which Quesnoy surrendered, the last of their

* Coxe, vi. 205.

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long line of triumphs, Ormond having exhausted every sort of procrastination to postpone the dreaded hour, was compelled to order the English troops to march. He in vain, however, gave a similar order to the auxiliaries in British pay. The hereditary prince of Cassel replied—"The Hessians would gladly march, if it were to fight the French." Another, "We do not serve for pay, but fame." The native English, however, were compelled to obey the order of their sovereign, and they set out, twelve thousand strong, from the camp at Cambresis. Of all the Germans in British pay, only one battalion of Holstein men, and a regiment of dragoons from Liege, accompanied them. Silent and dejected they took their way; the men kept their eyes on the ground, the officers did not venture to return the parting salute of the comrades who had so long fought and conquered by their side. Not a word was spoken on either side, the hearts of all were too full for utterance; but the averted eye, the mournful air, the blush of indignation, told the deep emotion which was every where felt. It seemed as if the Allies were following to the grave, with profound affliction, the whole body of their British comrades. But when the troops reached their resting-place for the night, and the suspension of arms was proclaimed at the head of each regiment, the general indignation became so vehement, that even the bonds of military discipline were unable to restrain it. A universal cry, succeeded by a loud murmur, was heard through the camp. The British soldiers were seen tearing their hair, casting their muskets on the ground, and rending their clothes, uttering all the while furious

exclamations against the government which had so shamefully betrayed them. The officers were so overwhelmed with vexation, that they sat apart in their tents looking on the ground, through very shame; and for several days they shrunk from the sight even of their fellow-soldiers. Many left their colours to serve with the Allies, others withdrew, and whenever they thought of Marlborough and their days of glory, tears filled their eyes.*

59. Great difficulties now experienced in the negotiation with France.

It soon appeared that it was not without reason that these gloomy presentiments prevailed on both sides, as to the consequences of the British withdrawing from the contest. So elated were the French by this withdrawal, that they speedily lost all sense of gratitude and even honesty, and refused to give up Dunkirk to the British; and the cession was only effected with great difficulty, on the earnest entreaties of the British government. So great were the difficulties which beset the negotiation, that St John was obliged to repair in person to Paris, where he remained *incognito* for a considerable time, and effected a compromise with regard to the objects still in dispute between the parties. The secession of England from the confederacy was now openly announced; and, as the Allies refused to abide by her preliminaries, the separate negotiation continued between the two countries, and lingered on for nearly a year after the suspension of arms.

Meanwhile, Eugene, after the departure of the British, continued his operations, and laid siege to Landrecies,

* CUNNINGHAM, ii. 432. MILNER, 356.

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60. Landrecies is ineffectually besieged by Eugene, who sustains a reverse at Denain.

the last of the barrier fortresses on the road to Paris, in the end of July. But it soon appeared that England had been the soul of the confederacy; and that it was the tutelary arm of Marlborough which had so long averted disaster, and chained victory to its standards. Nothing but defeat and misfortune attended the Allies after its secession. Even the great and tried abilities of Eugene were inadequate to procure for them one single success, after the colours of England ceased to wave in their ranks. During the investment of Landrecies, Villars drew together the garrisons from the neighbouring towns, no longer threatened by the English troops, and surprised at Denain a body of twelve thousand men, stationed there for the purpose of facilitating the passage of convoys to the besieging army. This body was totally defeated, with a loss of eight thousand. The blow was considerable in itself, but it was rendered doubly so by the position of Denain, a fortified post on the Scheldt, which kept up the communication between the portion of his army which was besieging Landrecies and that before Marchiennes. It cut his army in two; and Eugene had the mortification of arriving in person on the opposite side of the Scheldt at the close of the action, and witnessing the surrender of Lord Albemarle and three thousand men, without being able to render any assistance. This disaster rendered it necessary to raise the siege of Landrecies, and Villars immediately resumed the offensive. Douay was speedily invested: a fruitless effort of Eugene to retain it only exposed him to the mortification of witnessing its surrender. Not

expecting so sudden a reverse of fortune, the fortresses recently taken were not provided with provisions or ammunition, and were in no condition to make any effectual resistance. Quesnoy soon fell from this cause; and Bouchain, the last trophy of Marlborough's victories, opened its gates on the 10th October. The coalition was paralysed; and Louis, who so lately trembled for his capital, found his armies advancing from conquest to conquest, and tearing from the Allies the fruits of all their victories.*

61. Conclusion of the war between Austria and France at Rastadt, and the Dutch at Utrecht.

These disasters, and the evident inability of the Allied armies, without the aid of the English, to keep their ground in Flanders, in a manner compelled the Dutch, however unwilling, to follow the example of Great Britain, in treating separately with France. They became parties, accordingly, to the pacification at Utrecht; and Savoy also concluded peace there. But the barrier for which they had so ardently contended was, by the desertion of England, so much reduced, that it ceased to afford any effectual security against the encroachments of France. That power held the most important fortresses in Flanders which had been conquered by Louis XIV.—Cambray, Valenciennes, and Arras. Lille, the conquest on which Marlborough most prided himself, was restored by the Allies, and with it Bethune, Aire, St Venant, and many other places. The Dutch felt, in the strongest manner, the evil consequences of a treaty which thus, in a manner, left the enemy at

* *Mém de Villars*, ii. 396-421. CAPEFIGUE, *Louis XIV.*, vi. 272-275.

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their gates; and the irritation consequently produced against England was so violent, that it continued through the greater part of the eighteenth century. Austria, indignant at being thus deserted by all her Allies, continued the contest alone through another campaign. But she was overmatched in the struggle; her resources were exhausted; and, by the advice of Eugene, conferences were opened at Rastadt, from which, as a just reward for her perfidy, England was excluded. A treaty was soon concluded on the basis of the Treaty of Ryswick. It left Charles the Low Countries, and all the Spanish territories in Italy, except Sicily; but, with Sardinia, Bavaria was restored. France retained Landau, but restored New Brisach, Fribourg, and Kehl. Thus was that great power left in possession of the whole conquests ceded to Louis XIV. by the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle, Nimeguen, and Ryswick, with the vast addition of the family alliance with a Bourbon prince, possessing Spain and the Indies. A century of repeated wars on the part of England and the European powers, with France, followed by the dreadful struggle of the Revolutionary contest, and the costly campaigns of Wellington, were the legacy bequeathed to the nation by Bolingbroke and Harley, in arresting the course of Marlborough's victories, and restoring France to a preponderance, when on the eve of being reduced to a level consistent with the independence of other states. Well might Mr Pitt style the Treaty of Utrecht "the indelible reproach of the age."*

* *Mr Pitt to Sir Benjamin Keene.* COXE'S *Memoirs of the Spanish Kings of the House of Bourbon*, c. 57.

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62. Marlborough is received with the highest honours on the Continent, 24th Nov. 1713.

Marlborough's public career was now terminated; and the dissensions which had cast him down from power had so completely extinguished his political influence, that, during the remaining years of his life, he rarely appeared at all in public life. On landing on the Continent, at Brille, on the 24th November, he was received with such demonstrations of gratitude and respect, as showed how deeply his public services had sunk into the hearts of men, and how warmly they appreciated his efforts to avert from England and the Coalition the evils likely to flow from the treaty of Utrecht. At Maestricht he was welcomed with the honours usually reserved for sovereign princes; and although he did his utmost, on the journey to Aix-la-Chapelle, to avoid attracting the public attention, and to slip unobserved through by-ways, yet the eagerness of the public, or the gratitude of his old soldiers, discovered him wherever he went. Wherever he passed, crowds of all ranks were waiting to see him, were it only to get a glimpse of the hero who had saved the empire, and filled the world with his renown. All were struck with his noble air and demeanour, softened, though not weakened, by the approach of age. They declared that his appearance was not less overpowering than his sword. Many burst into tears when they recollected what he had been, and what he was, and how unaccountably the great nation to which he belonged had fallen from the height of glory to such degradation. Yet was the manner of Marlborough so courteous and yet animated, his conversation so simple and yet cheerful, that it was com-

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monly said at the time, "that the only things he had forgotten were his own deeds, and the only things he remembered were the misfortunes of others." Crowds of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, hastened to attend his levee at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 17th January 1713; and the Duke de Ledeguires, on leaving it, said, with equal justice and felicity,—"I can now say that I have seen the man who is equal to the Mareschal de Turenne in conduct, to the Prince of Condé in courage, and superior to the Mareschal de Luxembourg in success." *

63. Base ingratitude of the imperial court to him.

But if the veteran hero found some compensation in the unanimous admiration of foreign nations, for the ingratitude with which he had been treated by the government of his own, he was soon destined to find that gratitude for past services was not to be looked for among foreign potentates any more than his own countrymen. Upon the restoration of the Elector, by the treaty of Rastadt, the principality of Mendleheim, which had been bestowed upon him after the battle of Blenheim by the Emperor Joseph, was resumed by the Elector. No stipulation in his favour was made either by the British government or the Imperial court, and therefore the estate, which yielded a clear revenue of £2,000 a-year, was lost to Marlborough. He transmitted, through Prince Eugene, a memorial to the Emperor, claiming an indemnity for his loss; but though it was earnestly supported by that generous prince, yet being unaided by any efforts on the part of

* *Life of Marlborough*, 175.

the English ministry, it was allowed to fall asleep. An indemnity was often promised, even by the Emperor in writing,* but performance of the promise was always evaded. The duke was made a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, but obtained nothing but empty honours for his services; and at this moment these high-sounding titles are all that remain in the Marlborough family to testify the gratitude of the Cæsars to the hero who saved their Imperial and Royal thrones.†

64. Continued malice against him at home.

The same oblivion of past and invaluable services, when they were no longer required, pursued the illustrious general in his declining years, on the part of his own countrymen. The got-up stories about embezzlement and dilapidation of the public money, in Flanders, were allowed to go to sleep, when they had answered their destined purpose of bringing about his fall from political power. No grounds were found for a prosecution, or which could afford a chance of success, even in the swamped and now subservient House of Peers. But every thing that malice could suggest, or party bitterness effect, was employed to fill the last days of the immortal hero with anxiety and disquiet. Additional charges were brought against him by the commissioners, founded on the allegation that he had drawn a pistole

* "At the future congress, his Imperial Majesty will do all that is possible to sustain my Lord Duke in the principality of Mendleheim, but if it should so happen that any invincible difficulty should occur in that affair, his Imperial Highness will give his Highness an equivalent out of his own hereditary dominions."—*Emperor Charles VI. to Duchess of Marlborough*, August 8, 1712. COXE, vi. 248.

† COXE, vi. 249–251.

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per troop, and ten shillings a company, for mustering the soldiers, though, in the foreign auxiliaries, it was often not done. Marlborough at once transmitted a refutation of those fresh charges, so clear and decisive, that it entirely silenced those accusations.* But his enemies, though driven from this ground, still persecuted him with unrelenting malice. The noble pile of Blenheim, standing, as it did, an enduring monument at once of the Duke's services, and the nation's gratitude, was a grievous eyesore to the dominant majority in England, and they did all in their power to prevent its completion.

65. Suspension of the building of Blenheim at the public expense.

Orders were first given to the Treasury; on June 1, 1712, to suspend any further payments from the royal exchequer; and commissioners were appointed to investigate the claims of the creditors and expense of the work. They recommended the advance of a third to each claimant, which was accordingly made; but as many years elapsed, and no further payments to account were made, the principal creditors brought an action in the Court of Exchequer against the Duke, as personally liable for the amount, and the court pronounced decree in favour of the plaintiffs, which was affirmed, after a long litigation, in the House of Lords. Meanwhile the building itself, for want of any paymaster, was at a stand: and this noble pile, this proud monument of a nation's gratitude, would have remained a modern ruin to this day, had it not been completed from the private funds of the hero whose services it was

* *Duke of Marlborough's Answer*, June 2, 1713.

intended to commemorate. But the Duke of Marlborough, as well as the Duchess, were too much interested in the work to allow it to remain unfinished. He left by his will fifty thousand pounds to complete the building, which was still in a very unfinished state at the time of his death, and the duty was faithfully performed by the Duchess after his decease. From the accounts of the total expense, preserved at Blenheim, it appears that out of three hundred thousand pounds, which the whole edifice cost, no less than sixty thousand pounds was provided from the private funds of the Duke of Marlborough.*

66. Which arose from a plan for the restoration of the Stuarts.

It may readily be believed that so long continued and unrelenting a persecution of a man, so great and so distinguished a benefactor of his country, proceeded from something more than mere envy at greatness, powerful as that principle ever is in little minds. In truth, it was part of the deep-laid plan for the restoration of the Stuart line, which the declining state of the Queen's health, and the probable unpopularity of the Hanover family, now revived in greater vigour than ever. During this critical period, Marlborough, who was still on the Continent, remained perfectly firm to the Act of Settlement, and the Protestant cause. Convinced that England was threatened with a counter-revolution, he used his endeavours to secure the fidelity of the garrison of Dunkirk, and offered to embark at their head in support of the Protestant succession. He sent General Cadogan to make the necessary arrange-

* Coxe, vi. 369–373.

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ments with General Stanhope for transporting troops to England to support the Hanoverian succession, and offered to lend the Elector of Hanover £20,000 to aid him in his endeavour to secure the succession. So sensible was the Electoral house of the magnitude of his services, and his zeal in their behalf, that the Electress Sophia intrusted him with a blank warrant, appointing him commander-in-chief of her troops and garrisons, on her accession to the crown.*

67. Death of Anne, and Marlborough's conduct on the accession of the Hanover family.

On the death of Queen Anne, on August 1, 1714, Marlborough returned to England, and was soon after appointed captain-general and master-general of the ordnance. Bolingbroke and Oxford were shortly after impeached, and the former then threw off the mask by flying to France, where he openly entered into the service of the Pretender at St Germains. The Duke's great popularity with the army was soon after the means of enabling him to appease a mutiny in the guards, which at first threatened to be alarming. During the rebellion in 1715, he directed, in a great degree, the operations against the rebels, though he did not actually take the field; and to his exertions its rapid suppression is in a great measure to be ascribed.

68. His domestic bereavements and stroke of palsy, 28th May, 1716.

But the period had now arrived when the usual fate of mortality awaited this illustrious man. Severe domestic bereavements preceded his dissolution, and in a manner weaned him from a world which he had passed through with so much glory. His daughter, Lady Bridgewater, died in March 1714; and this was

* COXE, vi. 263.

soon followed by the death of his favourite daughter, Anne, Countess of Sunderland, who united uncommon elegance and beauty to unaffected piety and exemplary virtue. Marlborough himself was not long of following his beloved relatives to the grave. On the 28th May 1716, he was seized with a fit of palsy, so severe that it deprived him, for a time, alike of speech and resolution. He recovered, however, in a certain degree, and went to Bath for the benefit of the waters; and a gleam of returning light shone upon his mind when he visited Blenheim on the 18th October. He expressed great satisfaction at the survey of the plan, which reminded him of his great achievements, and in which he had always felt so deep an interest; but when he saw, in one of the few rooms which were finished, a picture of himself at the battle of Blenheim, he turned away with a mournful air, with the words—"Something then, but now ——."

69. His last years and death, June 15, 1722.

On November 18th he was attacked by another stroke, more severe than the former, and his family hastened to pay the last duties, as they conceived, to their departing parent. The strength of his constitution, however, triumphed for a time even over this violent attack; but though he continued, contrary to his own wishes, in conformity with those of his friends, who needed the support of his great reputation, to hold office, and occasionally appeared in parliament, yet his public career was at an end. A considerable addition was made to his fortune by the sagacity of the Duchess, who persuaded him to embark part of his funds in the South Sea scheme; but foreseeing the crash

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which was approaching, they sold out so opportunely, that instead of losing, she gained £100,000 by the transaction. On the 27th November 1721, he made his last appearance in the House of Lords; but in June 1722, he was again attacked with paralysis so violently, that he lay for some days nearly motionless, though in perfect possession of his faculties. To a question from the Duchess, whether he heard the prayers read as usual at night, on the 15th June, in his apartment, he replied, "Yes; and I joined in them." These were his last words. On the morning of the 16th he sank rapidly, and calmly breathed his last at four o'clock, in the 72d year of his age.*

70. And funeral, 28th June, 1722.

Envy is generally extinguished by death, because the object of it has ceased to stand in the way of those who feel it. Marlborough's funeral obsequies were celebrated with uncommon magnificence, and all ranks and parties joined in doing him honour. His body lay in state for several days at Marlborough House, and crowds flocked together from all the three kingdoms to witness the imposing ceremony of his funeral, which was performed with the utmost magnificence, on the 28th June. The procession was opened by a long array of military, among whom were General, now Lord Cadogan, and many other officers who had suffered and bled in his cause. Long files of heralds, officers-at-arms, and pursuivants followed, bearing banners emblazoned with his armorial achievements, among which appeared, in uncommon lustre, the standard of Woodstock exhibiting the arms of France on the cross of St George.

* LEDIARD, 496. COXE, vi. 384, 385.

In the centre of the cavalcade was a lofty car, drawn by eight horses, which bore the mortal remains of the hero, under a splendid canopy adorned by plumes, military trophies, and heraldic devices of conquest. Shields were affixed to the sides, bearing the names of the towns he had taken, and the fields he had won. Blenheim was there, and Oudenarde, Ramilies and Malplaquet, Lille and Tournay, Bethune, Douay, and Ruremonde, Bouchain and Mons, Aire, St Venant and Liege, Maestricht and Ghent. The number made the English blush for the manner in which they had treated their hero. On either side were five generals in military mourning, bearing aloft banderoles, on which were emblazoned the arms of the family. Eight dukes supported the pall; besides the relatives of the deceased, the noblest and proudest of England's nobility joined in the procession. Yet the most moving part of the ceremony was the number of old soldiers who had combated with the hero on his fields of fame, and who might now be known, in the dense crowds which thronged the streets, by their uncovered heads, gray hairs, and the tears which trickled down their cheeks. The body was deposited, with great solemnity, in Westminster Abbey, at the east end of the tomb of Henry VII.; but this was not its final resting-place in this world. It was soon after removed to the chapel at Blenheim, where it was deposited in a magnificent mausoleum, and there it still remains, surmounted by the noble pile which the genius of a Vanbrugh had conceived to express a nation's gratitude.*

* Coxe, vi. 384–387.

CHAPTER VII.

MARLBOROUGH.—EUGENE.—FREDERICK.—NAPOLEON.—WELLINGTON.

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1. Change in the system of war in Marlborough's time.

THE extraordinary merit of Marlborough's military talents will not be duly appreciated, unless the peculiar nature of the contest he was called on to direct, and the character which he assumed in his time, is taken into consideration. The feudal times had ceased—at least so far as the raising of a military force by its machinery was concerned. Louis XIV., indeed, when pressed for men, more than once summoned the ban and the arriere-ban of France to his standards, and he always had a gallant array of feudal nobility in his ante-chambers, or around his head-quarters. But war, both on his part and that of his antagonists, was carried on, generally speaking, with standing armies, and supported by the belligerent state. The vast, though generally tumultuary array which the Plantagenet or Valois sovereigns summoned to their support, but which, bound only to serve for forty days, generally disappeared before a few months of hostilities were over, could no longer be relied on. The modern system invented by revolutionary France, of making war maintain war, and sending forth starving multitudes with arms in their hands, to subsist by the plunder of the adjoining states,

was unknown. The national passions had not been roused, which alone could bring it into operation. The decline of the feudal system forbade the hope that contests could be maintained by the chivalrous attachment of a faithful nobility: the democratic spirit had not been so aroused as to supply its place by popular fervour. Religious passions, indeed, had been strongly excited; but they had prompted men rather to suffer than to act: the disputations of the pulpit were their natural arena: in the last extremity they were more allied to the resignation of the martyr, than the heroism of the soldier. Between the two, there extended a long period of above a century and a half, during which governments had acquired the force, and mainly relied on the power, of standing armies; but the resources at their disposal for their support were so limited, that the greatest economy in the husbanding both of men and money was indispensable.

2. Nature of the feudal wars.

Richard Cœur de Lion, Edward III., and Henry V., were the models of feudal leaders, and their wars were a faithful mirror of the feudal contests. Setting forth at the head of a force, which, if not formidable in point of numbers, was generally extremely so from equipment and the use of arms, the nobles around them were generally too proud and high-spirited to decline a combat, even on any possible terms of disadvantage. They took the field, as the knights went to a *champ clos*, to engage their adversaries in single conflict; and it was deemed equally dishonourable to retire without fighting from the one as the other. But they had no

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permanent force at their disposal to secure a lasting fruit, even from the greatest victories. The conquest of a petty province, a diminutive fortress, was often their only result. Hence the desperate battles, so memorable in warlike annals, which they fought, and hence the miserable and almost nugatory results which almost invariably followed the greatest triumphs. Cressy, Poictiers, and Azincour, followed by the expulsion of the English from France; Methven and Dunbar, by their ignominious retreat from Scotland; Ascalon and Ptolemais, by their being driven from the Holy Land, must immediately occur to every reader. This state of war necessarily imprinted a corresponding character on the feudal generals. They were high-spirited and daring in action — often skilful in tactics — generally ignorant of strategy — covetous of military renown, but careless of national advancement — and often more solicitous to conquer an adversary in single conflict, than to reduce a fortress or win a province.

3. Great change when armies were paid by Government.

But when armies were raised at the expense, not of nobles, but of kings — when their cost became a lasting and heavy drain on the royal exchequer, and they were yet felt to be indispensable to national security — sovereigns grew desirous of a more durable and profitable result from their victories. Standing armies, though commonly powerful — often irresistible when accumulated in large bodies — were yet extremely expensive. Their expense was felt the more from the great difficulty of getting the people in every country, at that period, to submit to any considerable amount of direct taxation.

More than one flourishing province had been lost, or powerful monarchy overturned, in the attempt to increase such burdens; as, for example, the loss of Holland to Spain, and the execution of Charles I. in England. In this dilemma, arising from the experienced necessity of raising standing armies on the one hand, and the extreme difficulty of permanently providing for them on the other, the only resource was to spare both the blood of the soldiers and the expenses of the government as much as possible. Durable conquests, acquisitions of towns and provinces which could yield revenues and furnish men, became the great object of ambition. The point of feudal honour was forgotten in the inanity of its consequences; the benefits of modern conquests were felt in the reality of their results. A *methodical* cautious system of war was thus made imperative upon generals by the necessities of their situation, and the objects expected from them by their respective governments. To risk little and gain much, became the great object: skill and stratagem gradually took the place of reckless daring; and the reputation of a general came to be measured rather by the permanent addition which his successes made to the revenues of his sovereign, than by the note with which the trumpet of Fame had proclaimed his own exploits.

4. Turenne introduced this system, and brought it to perfection.

Turenne was the first, and, in his day, the greatest general in this new and scientific system of war. He first applied to the military art the resources of prudent foresight, deep thought, and profound combination; and the results of his successes completely justified the

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discernment which had prompted Louis XIV. in placing him at the head of his armies. His methodical and far-seeing campaigns in Flanders, Franche Comté, Alsace, and Lorraine, in the early part of the reign of that monarch, added these valuable provinces to France, which have never since been lost. His conquests have proved more durable than those of the great Emperor, all of which were lost during the lifetime of their author. Napoleon's legions passed like a desolating whirlwind over Europe, but they gave only fleeting celebrity, and entailed lasting wounds on France. Turenne's slow, or more methodical and cautious conquests, have proved lasting acquisitions to the monarchy. Nancy still owns the French allegiance; Besançon and Strasbourg are to this day two of its frontier fortresses; Lille is yet a leading stronghold in its iron barrier. Napoleon, it is well known, had the highest possible opinion of Turenne. He was disposed to place him at the head of modern generals; and his very interesting analysis of his campaigns is not the least important part of his invaluable memoirs.

5. Character of Condé.

Condé, though living in the same age, and alternately the enemy and comrade of Turenne, belonged to a totally different class of generals, and, indeed, seemed to pertain to another age of the world. He was warmed by the spirit of chivalry; he bore its terrors on his sword's point. Heart and soul he was heroic. Like Clive or Alexander, he was consumed by that thirst for fame, that ardent passion for glorious achievements, which is the invariable characteristic of elevated, and the most

inconceivable quality to ordinary minds. In the prosecution of this object no difficulties could deter, no dangers daunt him. Though his spirit was chivalrous; though cavalry was the arm which suited his genius, and in which he chiefly delighted, he brought to the military art the power of genius and the resources of art; and no man could make better use of the power which the expiring spirit of feudality bequeathed to its scientific successors. He destroyed the Spanish infantry at Rocroy and Lens, not by mere desultory charges of the French horse, but by efforts of that gallant body as skilfully directed as those by which Hannibal overthrew the Roman legions at Trasymenæ and Cannæ. His genius was animated by the spirit of the fourteenth, but it was guided by the knowledge of the seventeenth, century.

6. Peculiar character of Marlborough as a general.

Bred in the school of Turenne, placed, like him, at the head of a force raised with difficulty, and maintained with still greater trouble, Marlborough was the greatest general of the methodical or scientific school which modern Europe has produced. No man knew better the importance of deeds which fascinate the minds of men; none could decide quicker, or strike harder, when the proper time for doing so arrived. None, when the decisive crisis of the struggle approached, could expose his person more fearlessly, or lead his reserves more gallantly into the very hottest of the enemy's fire. To his combined intrepidity and quickness in thus bringing the reserves, at the decisive moment, into action, all his wonderful victories, and in particular Ramilies and Malplaquet, are to be ascribed. But, in the ordinary case,

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he preferred the bloodless methods of skill and arrangement. Combination was his great *forte;* and in this he was not exceeded by Napoleon himself. To deceive the enemy as to the real point of attack — to perplex him by marches and countermarches — to assume and constantly maintain the initiative — to win by skill what could not be achieved by force, was his great delight; and in that, the highest branch of the military art, he was unrivalled in modern times. He did not despise stratagem. Like Hannibal, he resorted to that arm frequently, and with never-failing success. His campaigns, in that respect, bear a closer resemblance to those of the illustrious Carthaginian than to those of any general in modern Europe. Like him, too, his administrative and diplomatic qualities were equal to his military powers. By his winning manners he retained in unwilling, but still effective union, an alliance, unwieldy from its magnitude, and discordant by its jealousies; and kept, in willing multitudes, around his standards, a *colluvies omnium gentium*, of various languages, habits, and religion — held in subjection by nothing else but the strong bond of admiration for their general, and a desire to share in his triumphs.

7. His extraordinary prudence and address.

Consummate address, and never-failing prudence, were the great characteristics of the English commander. With such judgment did he measure his strength against that of his adversary — so skilfully did he choose the points of attack, whether in strategy or tactics—so well weighed were all his enterprises, and so admirably prepared the means of carrying them into execution, that

none of his arrangements ever miscarried. It was a common saying at the time, and the preceding narrative amply justifies it, that he never fought a battle which he did not gain, nor laid siege to a town which he did not take. This extraordinary and unbroken success extended to all his manœuvres, however trivial; and it has been already noticed, that the first disaster of any moment which occurred to his arms during *nine* successive and active campaigns, was the destruction of a convoy destined for the siege of St Venant, in October 1710, by one of Villars' detachments.* It was the admirable powers of arrangement and combination which he brought to bear on all parts of his army, equally from the highest to the lowest parts, which was the cause of this extraordinary and uninterrupted success.

8. Though inferior in force, he always maintained the initiative.

He was often outnumbered by the enemy, and was always opposed by a homogeneous army, animated by one strong national and military spirit; while he was himself at the head of a discordant array of many different nations, some of them with little turn for warlike exploit, others lukewarm, or even treacherous in the cause. But notwithstanding this, he never lost the ascendant. From the time when he first began the war on the banks of the Maese in 1702, till his military career was closed in 1711, within the iron barrier of France, by the intrigues of his political opponents at home, he never abandoned the initiative. He was constantly on the offensive. When inferior in force, as he

* *Ante*, chap. vi. § 13, page 312.

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often was, he supplied the deficiency of military strength by skill and combination: when his position was endangered by the errors or treachery of others, as was still more frequently the case, he waited till a false move on the part of his adversaries enabled him to retrieve his affairs by some brilliant and decisive stroke. It was thus that he restored the war in Germany, after the cause of the Emperor had been well-nigh ruined, by means of the brilliant cross march into Bavaria, and the splendid victory at Blenheim. Thus also he regained Flanders for the Archduke by the stroke at Ramilies, after the imperial cause in that quarter had been all but lost by the treacherous surrender of Ghent and Bruges, in the very centre of his water communications.

9. Nature of war in the time of Marlborough.

War, in the days of Marlborough, was a totally different art from what it had been, or afterwards became. The conqueror neither swept over the world, with the fierce tempest of Scythian war, nor mastered it by the steady superiority of Roman discipline. No vehement and universal passions had brought whole nations into the field; mankind were roused neither by the fanaticism of Mahommedan delusion, nor the dreams of French democracy. Europe had not risen up as one man to shake off the cruel despotism of a Napoleon. The forces of the powers on either side were very nearly matched; and the armies which their generals led into action were almost constantly equal to each other. Any superiority that did exist in point of numbers was almost invariably on the side of the French; and, in the homogeneous quality of their troops, they always

had the advantage. Success in these nicely balanced circumstances could be gained only by superiority of skill; and the smiles of fortune were reserved, not for the most daring, but the most judicious. A campaign resembled a protracted game at chess between two players of nearly equal ability, in which the antagonists set out at first uniformly with equal forces, and the victory could only be gained by a skilful plan laid on the one side, or the felicitous advantage taken of a false move on the other. The campaigns of Marlborough and Villars or Vendôme, were exactly of this description. And perhaps in no other contests, since the dawn of the military art, was so much talent exerted by the commanders on either side, or was success so evidently the result of the superior generalship of the one who in the end proved victorious.

10. Circumspection was in him a matter of necessity.

Prudence and circumspection in the conduct of such a war was not less imposed on Marlborough by his situation than in unison with his character. The general of a coalition has one duty which beyond all others it behoves him to discharge, and that is, to avoid disaster. The leader of the troops of a popular state must always regard his domestic enemies at home at least as formidable as those to whom he is opposed in the field. They proved more so to Marlborough; he conquered France and Louis XIV., but he was overturned by the Tories and Bolingbroke. Such are the jealousies of governments, so diverse and opposite the interests of nations, that a coalition, unless in the tumult of unhoped-for success, or under the terrors of instant danger,

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is always on the verge of dissolution. It proved so both with that which Marlborough led, and that which Castlereagh guided. A single considerable disaster at once breaks it up. Long-continued success, by averting danger, has not less certainly the same effect. Of every coalition it may be truly said what Wellington, in a moment of irritation, said of the English army, that it is liable to be dissolved equally by victory or defeat. The general of a confederacy is constantly surrounded by lukewarm selfish allies ready to fall off, and envenomed domestic factions ready to fall on. Such was the position of Marlborough; such, a century afterwards, was the situation of Wellington. Unbroken success was to both the condition of existence. Marlborough was ruined by the indecisive result of the campaign of 1711; Wellington all but ruined by the retreat from Talavera in 1809. A fourth part of the defeats from which Frederick or Napoleon recovered, and which were the price at which they purchased their astonishing triumphs, would, from the clamour they raised at home, have destroyed Marlborough or Wellington. A despotic monarch commanding his own armies, can afford to be daring in the field, for he has to take counsel only from the intrepidity of his own breast; the general of a coalition must be circumspect, for he is dependant on the fears, and liable to be thwarted by the jealousies of others.

The same necessity was the cause of the adoption of the system of sieges, and of the fixing of the war in Flanders, which formed such striking features in the

military career of Marlborough. This matter has been the subject of extraordinary misconception, and unbounded misrepresentation, from the contemporary period to the present time. It was said that in attacking the enemy in the Low Countries, he took the bull by the horns, while in assaulting him from Lorraine or Alsace, he would have taken him on his defenceless side; and the successful results of the invasions of 1814 and 1815 are referred to as proving what may be expected from disregarding frontier fortresses, and striking at once at the heart of the enemy's power. Those who make these remarks would do well to consider what force Marlborough had at his disposal to make such a daring invasion. He was *constantly inferior to the enemy's army immediately opposed to him.* The successes which he gained were entirely the result of superior skill in strategy or tactics on his part; their constant recurrence made men forget, and has made posterity forget, the extraordinary difficulties which had to be overcome before they were attained. If we would see what would have been the issue of the war if his tutelary arm and far-seeing genius had been awanting, we have only to look at Denain and the campaign of 1713, even when the ardent genius of Eugene directed the Allied forces.

11. He was compelled to adopt the system of sieges, and fix the war in Flanders.

To have invaded a compact monarchy like France, possessing such vast military resources, and animated by so strong a military spirit, with an inferior force, leaving the whole triple line of frontier fortresses behind, would have been to expose the Allied army to certain

12. Dangers of the opposite system.

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destruction. It must have left half its numbers behind to blockade the fortresses and keep up the communications; the enemy's force, by falling back to the centre of his resources would have been doubled. Arrived on the Oise, Marlborough would have found himself with fifty thousand men in presence of an hundred thousand. The result of the invasions of Germany in 1704 by Tallard, of France in 1792 by the Duke of Brunswick, of Russia in 1812 by Napoleon, demonstrate the extreme danger of penetrating into an enemy's country, even with the greatest force, without adequate regard to the communications of the invading army. The cases of 1814 and 1815, when a million of experienced soldiers fell on a single and exhausted state, is the exception not the rule; and their narrow escape from defeat in the first of these years proves the hazard of such a proceeding. By assailing France on the side of the Low Countries, and working by degrees through its iron frontier, Marlborough took the only certain way of reducing its power, because he secured his rear as he advanced, and reduced the enemy's strength by the successive captures of the frontier garrisons, till, when the line was broken through, like a knight when his armour was uncased, it lay without defence.

13. Reasons why Marlborough's genius was underrated in his life.

Lord Chesterfield, who knew him well, said that Marlborough was a man of excellent parts, and strong good sense, but of no very shining genius. The uninterrupted success of his campaigns, however, joined to the unexampled address with which he allayed the jealousies and stilled the discords of the confederacy

whose armies he led, decisively demonstrates that the polished earl's opinion was not a just one, and that his partiality for the graces led him to ascribe an undue influence in the great duke's career to the inimitable suavity and courtesy of his manner. His enterprises and stratagems, his devices to deceive the enemy, and counterbalance inferiority of force by superiority of conduct; the eagle eye, which in the decisive moment he brought to bear on the field of battle, and the rapidity with which in person he struck the final blow from which the enemy never recovered, bespeak the intuitive genius of war. It was the admirable *balance* of his mental qualities which caused his originality to be undervalued: no one power stood out in such bold relief as to overshadow all the others, and rivet the eye by the magnitude of its proportions. Thus his consummate judgment made the world overlook his invention; his uniform prudence caused his daring to be forgotten; his incomparable combinations often concealed the capacious mind which had put the whole in motion. He was so invariably successful, that men forgot how difficult it is always to succeed in war. It was not till he was withdrawn from the conduct of the campaign, when disaster immediately attended the Allied arms, and France resumed the ascendant over the coalition, that Europe became sensible who had been its soul, and how much had been lost when his mighty understanding was no longer at the head of affairs.

Lord Bolingbroke, whose great abilities caused him to discern exalted merit, even through all the mists of

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14. He was the perfection of genius, matured by experience.

party prejudice, said that Marlborough was the "perfection of genius, matured by *experience*." He did not say by *knowledge*. This was really his character: Bolingbroke has said neither more nor less than the truth. Marlborough had received a very limited education; he had never been at a university; he had none of the varied and extensive erudition which enriched the minds of his great rivals in politics, St John and Harley. Thrown into the guards at the age of sixteen, having been previously only at a grammar school, and afterwards a page to the Duke of York, he entered upon life without any of the vast advantages which knowledge affords. What he subsequently gained was acquired in courts and camps. It is the strongest proof of the extraordinary strength and sagacity of his mind, that with such limited advantages he became what he was—the first in arms, and second to none in politics of the age in which he lived. He made admirable use of the opportunities he afterwards enjoyed. In the school of Turenne he imbibed the art of war; in the palace of St James he learned the mysteries of courts; in the House of Peers, and at the Hague, he became master of the art of diplomacy. In these varied situations he acquired the knowledge, of all others the most valuable, which can no where be learned so well—that of the world and the human heart. His career affords the most striking proof of how much the real education of every mind depends upon itself, and how much it is in the power of strong sense, accompanied by vigilant observation in after life, to compensate the want

of those advantages which, under more favourable circumstances, give to early youth the benefit of the acquirements and experience of others.

15. His great address and suavity of manner.

A most inadequate opinion would be formed of Marlborough's mental character, if his military exploits alone are taken into consideration. Like all other intellects of the first order, he was equally capable of great achievements in peace as in war, and shone forth with not less lustre in the deliberations of the cabinet, or in the correspondence of diplomacy, than in directing columns on the field of battle, or tracing out the line of approaches for the attack of fortified towns. Nothing could exceed the judgment and temper with which he reconciled the jarring interests, and smoothed down the rival pretensions of the coalesced cabinets. The danger was not so pressing as to unite their rival governments, as it afterwards did those of the Grand Alliance in 1813, which overthrew Napoleon; and incessant exertions, joined to the highest possible diplomatic address, judgment of conduct, and suavity of manner, were required to prevent the coalition, on various occasions during the course of the war, from falling to pieces. As it was, the intrigues of Bolingbroke and the Tories in England, and the ascendency of Mrs Masham in the Queen's bedchamber councils, at last counterbalanced all his achievements, and led to a peace which abandoned the most important objects of the war, and was fraught, as the event has proved, with serious danger to the independence and even the existence of England. His winter campaign at the allied courts, as he himself said, always

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equalled in duration, and often exceeded in importance and difficulty, that in summer with the enemy; and nothing is more certain than that, if a man of less capacity had been intrusted with the direction of its diplomatic relations, the coalition would have soon broken up without having accomplished any of the objects for which the war had been undertaken, from the mere selfishness and dissensions of the cabinets by whom it was conducted.

16. His character as a statesman, and in private.

With one blot, for which the justice of history, or the partiality of biography neither can nor should attempt to make any apology, Marlborough's private character seems to have been unexceptionable, and was evidently distinguished by several noble and amiable qualities. That he was bred a courtier, and owed his first elevation to the favour with which he was regarded by one of the King's mistresses, was not his fault:—it arose, perhaps, necessarily from his situation, and the graces and beauty with which he had been so prodigally endowed by nature. The young officer of the Guards, who in the army of Louis XIV. passed by the name of the handsome Englishman, could hardly be expected to be free from the consequences of female partiality at the court of Charles II. Shortly after the Revolution he was undoubtedly involved in many dark intrigues for the restoration of the exiled family: he seemed to be desirous to undo what he himself had done. It is the fatal effect of one deviation from rectitude that it renders subsequent ones almost unavoidable, or so confounds the moral sense, as to make their turpitude be unfelt. But

in maturer years, his conduct in public, after Anne had placed him in high command, was uniformly consistent, straightforward, and honourable. He was a sincere patriot, and ardently attached both to his country and to the principles of freedom, at a time when both were well-nigh forgotten in the struggles of party, and the fierce contests for royal or popular favour. Though bred up in a licentious court, and early exposed to the most entrancing of its seductions, he was in mature life strictly correct, both in his conduct and conversation. He resisted every temptation to which his undiminished beauty exposed him after his marriage, and was never known either to utter, or permit to be uttered in his presence, a light or indecent expression. He discouraged to the utmost degree all intemperance and licentiousness in his soldiers, and constantly laboured to impress upon them a sense of moral duty and supreme superintendence. Divine service was regularly performed in all his camps, both morning and evening; previous to a battle, prayers were read at the head of every regiment, and the first act, after a victory, was a solemn thanksgiving. "By those means," says a contemporary biographer, who served in his army, "his camp resembled a quiet, well-governed city. Cursing and swearing were seldom heard among the officers; a drunkard was the object of scorn; and even the soldiers, many of them the refuse and dregs of the nation, became, at the close of one or two campaigns, tractable, civil, sensible, and clean, and had an air and spirit above the vulgar."

In political life, during his career after the Revolution,

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17. His political character after the Revolution.

he was consistent and firm; faithful to his party, but more faithful still to his country. He was a generous friend, an attached, perhaps a too fond, husband. During the whole of his active career he retained a constant sense of the superintendence of the Supreme Being, and was ever the first to ascribe the successes which he had gained to Divine protection; a disposition which shone forth with peculiar grace amidst the din of arms and the flourish of trumpets for his own mighty achievements. Even the one occasion, on which, like David, he fell from his high principles, will be regarded by the equitable observer with charitable, if not forgiving eyes. He will recollect, that perfection never yet belonged to a child of Adam; he will measure the dreadful nature of the struggle which awaits an upright and generous mind when loyalty and gratitude impel one way, and religion and patriotism another. Without attempting to justify an officer who employs the power bestowed by one government to elevate another on its ruins, he will yet reflect, that in such a crisis, even the firmest heads and the best hearts may be led astray: he will recollect that, as already noticed, the heroic Ney, in another age, did the same. If he is wise, he will ascribe the fault, for fault it was, not so much to the individual, as to the time in which he lived; and feel a deeper thankfulness that his own lot has been cast in a happier age, when the great moving passions of the human heart act in the same direction, and a public man need not fear that he is wanting in his duty to his sovereign, because he is performing that due to his country.

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18. His faults and weaknesses.

Marlborough, however, was but a man, and therefore not without the usual blemishes and weaknesses of humanity. The great blot on his character, the inexcusable act in his life,—that of having accepted a command from James II., and afterwards betrayed him—will be found on examination to be but a part, though doubtless the most conspicuous one, of the prevailing disposition and secret weakness of his character. He was extremely ambitious, and little scrupulous about the means by which elevation was to be attained or prolonged. He repeatedly yielded to the solicitations of those around him, from the desire to avoid ruining his party, under circumstances when the dignity of his character required a more independent and resolute conduct. He was not by nature a bad, or by habit a dishonourable man, and yet he did a most base and dishonourable thing; he abandoned his King and benefactor when holding an important command under him. He did not possess the mental independence, the strong sense of rectitude, the keen feelings of honour, which lead pure and elevated minds to make shipwreck of their fortunes in the cause of duty. He was possessed by strong moral and religious principle, but when a crisis arrived they yielded to the whisperings of expedience, or rather the deceitfulness of sin made him believe that his duty pointed to the course which his interest demanded. He had more of Cæsar in him than Cato. It never would be said of him—

Victrix causa Deis placuit sed victa Catoni.

In justice to Marlborough, however, it must be recol-

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19. Circumstances which palliate these faults in him.

lected that he lived in an age of revolutions, when the crown had been recently twice subverted, and a new dynasty placed on the throne; when men's minds were confused and their ideas unhinged with regard to public duty; and when that fatal effect of revolutionary success had taken place—the ascribing to public actions no other test but success. And yet, so mixed is the condition of mankind, and so great the ascendency of selfishness in human affairs, that Marlborough's extraordinary rise and long-continued power is in great part to be ascribed to these moral weaknesses in his character. Had he possessed the noble spirit of one of the old cavaliers, he would have adhered to James in his misfortune, and become a respectable but unknown exile at St Germains, instead of the illustrious leader of the coalition. He thus affords another instance to the many which history affords of the truth of Johnson's saying, "that no man ever rose from a private station to exalted power amongst men, in whom great and commanding qualities were not combined with meannesses that would be inconceivable in ordinary life."

20. His private character and elevated ideas in the disposal of money.

Marlborough was often accused of avarice: but his conduct through life sufficiently demonstrated that in him the natural desire to accumulate a fortune, which belongs to every rational mind, was kept in subjection to more elevated principles. The great wealth which he acquired from his numerous appointments, and the royal and parliamentary rewards bestowed on him for his services, were sufficient to excite the envy of the vulgar, and this feeling was eagerly fed by those who

pandered to their passions. Swift contrasted, in a popular diatribe, the scanty rewards of Roman triumph with the half million which had attested British gratitude. But there was no real foundation for this aspersion. His conduct belied it. His repeated refusal of the government of the Netherlands, with its magnificent appointment of £60,000 a-year, was a sufficient proof how much he despised money when it interfered with public duty; his splendid edifices, both in London and Blenheim, attest how little he valued it for any other purpose but as it might be applied to noble and worthy objects.*

21. His magnanimity and humanity.

He possessed the magnanimity in judging of others which is the invariable characteristic of real greatness. Envy was unknown, suspicion loathsome to him. He often suffered by the generous confidence with which he trusted his enemies. He was patient under contradiction; placid and courteous both in his manners and demeanour; and owed great part of his success, both in the field and in the cabinet, to the invariable suavity and charm of his manners. His humanity was uniformly conspicuous. Not only his own soldiers, but his enemies never failed to experience it. Like Wellington, his attention to the health and comforts of his men was incessant; which, with his daring in the field and uniform success in strategy, endeared him in the highest degree to the men. Troops of all nations equally trusted him; and the common saying, when they were in any difficulty,

* Marlborough's house in London cost about £100,000. COXE, vi. 399.

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"Never mind, 'Corporal John' will get us out of it," was heard as frequently in the Dutch, Danish, or German, as in the English language. He frequently gave the weary soldiers a place in his carriage, and got out himself to accommodate more; and his first care, after an engagement, invariably was to visit the field of battle, and do his utmost to assuage the sufferings of the wounded, both among his own men and those of the enemy. After the battle of Malplaquet, he divided all the money at his private disposal among the wounded officers of the enemy.*

22. His character as drawn by Adam Smith and Bolingbroke.

The character of this illustrious man has been thus portrayed by two of the greatest writers in the English language, the latter of whom will not be accused of undue partiality to his political enemy. "It is a characteristic," says Adam Smith, "almost peculiar to the great Duke of Marlborough, that ten years of such uninterrupted and such splendid successes as scarce any other general could boast of, never betrayed him into a single rash action, scarce into a single rash word or expression. The same temperate coolness and self-command cannot, I think, be ascribed to any other great warrior of latter times, not to Prince Eugene, nor to the late King of Prussia, nor to the Great Prince of Condé, nor even to Gustavus Adolphus. Turenne seems to have approached the nearest to it; but several actions of his life demonstrate that it was in him by no means so perfect as in the great Duke of Marlborough."† "By

* CAPEFIGUE, *Louis XIV.*, vi. 125.
† SMITH'S *Moral Sentiments*, ii. 158.

King William's death," says Bolingbroke, "the Duke of Marlborough was raised to the head of the army, and indeed of the confederacy, where he, a private man, a subject, obtained by merit and by management a more decided influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain, had given to King William. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the Grand Alliance, were kept more compact and entire, but a more rapid and vigorous motion was given to the whole; and instead of languishing or disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor, however, of their actions, were crowned with the most triumphant success. I take with pleasure this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I know, whose virtues I admire, and whose memory, as the *greatest general and greatest minister that our country or any other has produced*, I honour." *

23. The five great Generals of modern times.

Five generals, by the common consent of men, stand forth pre-eminent in modern times for the magnitude of the achievements they effected, and the splendour of the talents they displayed — Eugene, Marlborough, Frederick, Napoleon, and Wellington. It is hard to say which appears the greatest, whether we regard the services they have rendered to their respective countries, or the durable impress their deeds have left on human affairs. All had difficulties the most serious to contend with, obstacles apparently insurmountable to overcome,

* BOLINGBROKE'S *Letters on the Study of History*, ii. 172.

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and all proved in the brightest parts of their career victorious over them. All have immortalised their names by exploits far exceeding those recorded of other men. All have left the effects of their exploits durably imprinted in the subsequent fate of nations. The relative position of the European states, the preservation of public rights, the maintenance of the balance of power, the salvation of the weak from the grasp of the strong, has been mainly owing to their exertions. To their biography is attached not merely the fortune of the countries to which they belonged, but the general destinies of Europe, and through it of the human race.

24. Leading characteristics of each.

To give a faithful picture, in a few pages, of such men, may seem a hopeless, and to their merits an invidious task. A brief summary of the chief actions of those of them to ordinary readers least known, is, however, indispensable to lay a foundation for their comparison with the character of those whose deeds are as household words. It is not impossible to convey to those who are familiar with their exploits, a pleasing *resumé* of their leading features and salient points of difference; to those who are not, to give some idea of the pleasure which the study of their characters is calculated to afford. Generals, like writers or artists, have certain leading characteristics which may be traced through all their achievements; a peculiar impress has been communicated by nature to their minds, which appears, not less than on the painter's canvass or in the poet's lines, in all their actions. As much as grandeur of conception distinguishes Homer, tenderness of feeling

Virgil, and sublimity of thought Milton, does impetuous daring characterise Eugene, consummate generalship Marlborough, indomitable firmness Frederick, lofty genius Napoleon, unerring wisdom Wellington. Greatness in the military, as in every other art, is to be attained only by strong natural talents, perseveringly directed to one object, undistracted by other pursuits, undivided by inferior ambition. The men who have risen to the highest eminence in war, have done so by the exercise of faculties as great, and the force of genius as transcendent, as those which produced a Homer, a Bacon, or a Newton. Success, doubtless, commands the admiration of the multitude; military glory captivates the unthinking throng; but to those who know the military art, and can appreciate real merit, the chief ground for admiration of its great masters, is a sense of the difficulties, to most unknown, which they have overcome.

25. Early life of Eugene.

PRINCE EUGENE, though belonging to the same age, often acting in the same army, and sometimes commanding alternately with Marlborough, was a general of an essentially different character. A descendant of the House of Savoy, born at Paris in 1663, and originally destined for the church, he early evinced a repugnance to theological studies, and instead of his breviary, was devouring in secret Plutarch's lives of ancient heroes. His figure was slender, and his constitution at first weak; but these disadvantages, which caused Louis XIV. to refuse him a regiment, from an opinion that he was not equal to its duties, were soon overcome by the ardour of his mind. Immediately upon

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this refusal, setting out for Vienna, he entered the Imperial service; but he was still pursued by the enmity of Louvois, who procured from Louis a decree which pronounced sentence of banishment on all Frenchmen in the armies of foreign powers who should fail to return to their country. "I will re-enter France in spite of him," said Eugene; and he was more than once as good as his word.

26. Character of his warfare, and his first great victory over the Turks.

His genius for war was not methodical or scientific, like that of Turenne or Marlborough, nor essentially chivalrous like that of the Black Prince or the Great Condé. It was more akin to the terrible sweep of the Tartar chiefs; it savoured more of oriental daring. He was as prodigal of the blood of his soldiers as Napoleon; but, unlike him, he never failed to expose his own person with equal readiness in the fight. He did not reserve his attack in person for the close of the affray, like the French Emperor, but was generally to be seen in the fire from the very outset. It was with difficulty he could be restrained from heading the first assault of grenadiers, or leading on the first charge of horse. His earliest distinguished command was in Italy, in 1691, and his abilities soon gave his kinsman, the Duke of Savoy, an ascendant there over the French. But it was at the great battle of Zenta, on the Teife, where he surprised and totally defeated Cara-Mustapha, at the head of 120,000 Turks, that his wonderful genius for war first shone forth in its full lustre. He there killed or wounded 20,000 of the enemy, drove 10,000 into the river, took their whole artillery and standards, and

entirely dispersed their mighty array. Like Nelson at Copenhagen, Eugene had gained this glorious victory by acting in opposition to his orders, which were positively to avoid a general engagement. This circumstance, joined to the envy excited by his unparalleled triumph, raised a storm at court against the illustrious general, and led to his being deprived of his command, and even threatened with a court-martial. The public voice, however, at Vienna, loudly condemned such base ingratitude towards so great a benefactor to the Imperial dominions; and the want of his directing eye being speedily felt in the campaign with the Turks, the Emperor was obliged to restore him to the command, which he, however, only agreed to accept on receiving a *carte blanche* for the conduct of the war.

27. His campaigns in Italy and Germany.

The peace of Carlowetz, in 1699, between the Imperialists and the Ottomans, soon after restored him to a pacific life, and the study of history, in which, above any other, he delighted. But on the breaking out of the war of the Succession, in 1701, he was restored to his military duties, and during two campaigns measured his strength, always with success, in the plains of Lombardy, with the scientific abilities of Marshal Catinat, and the learned experience of Marshal Villeroi, the latter of whom he made prisoner during a nocturnal attack on Cremona, in 1703. In 1704, he was transferred to the north of the Alps to unite with Marlborough in making head against the great army of Marshal Tallard, which was advancing, in so threatening a manner, through Bavaria; and he shared with the illustrious

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Englishman the glorious victory of Blenheim, which at once delivered Germany, and hurled the French armies, with disgrace, behind the Rhine. Then commenced that steady friendship, and sincere and mutual regard, between these illustrious men, which continued unbroken till the time of their death, and is not the least honourable trait in the character of each. But the want of his protecting arm was long felt in Italy. The great abilities of the Duke de Vendôme had well-nigh counterbalanced there all the advantages of the Allies in Germany; and the issue of the war in the plains of Piedmont continued doubtful till the glorious victory of Eugene, on the 7th Sept. 1706, when he stormed the French intrenchments around Turin, defended by eighty thousand men, at the head of thirty thousand only, and totally defeated Marshal Marsin and the Duke of Orleans, with such loss, that the French armies were speedily driven across the Alps.

28. And with Marlborough in Flanders.

Eugene was now received in the most flattering manner at Vienna; the lustre of his exploits had put to silence, if not to shame, the malignity of his enemies. "I have but one fault to find with you," said the Emperor when he was first presented to him after his victory, "and that is that you expose yourself too much." He was next placed at the head of the Imperial armies in Flanders; and shared with Marlborough in the conduct, as he did in the glories, of Oudenarde and Malplaquet. Intrusted with the command of the corps which besieged Lille, he was penetrated with the utmost admiration for Marshal Boufflers, and evinced the native generosity of

his disposition, by the readiness with which he granted the most favourable terms to the illustrious besieged chief, who had, with equal skill and valour, conducted the defence. When the articles of capitulation proposed by Boufflers were placed before him, he said immediately, without looking at them, "I will subscribe them at once: knowing well you would propose nothing unworthy of you and me." The delicacy of his subsequent attentions to his noble prisoner evinced the sincerity of his admiration. When Marlborough's influence at the English court was sensibly declining, in 1711, he repaired to London, and exerted all his talents and address to bring the English council back to the common cause, and restore his great rival to his former ascendency with Queen Anne. When it was all in vain, and the English armies withdrew from the coalition, Eugene did all that skill and genius could achieve to make up for the great deficiency arising from the withdrawal of Marlborough and his gallant followers; and when it had become apparent that he was overmatched by the French armies, he was the first to counsel his Imperial master to conclude peace, which was done at Rastadt on the 6th March, 1714.

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Great as had been the services then performed by Eugene for the Imperialists, they were outdone by those which he subsequently rendered in the wars with the Turks. In truth it was he who first effectually broke their power, and for ever delivered Europe from the sabres of the Osmanlis, by which it had been incessantly threatened for three hundred years. Intrusted with

29. His astonishing successes over the Turks.

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the command of the Austrian army in Hungary, sixty thousand strong, he gained at Peterwardin, in 1716, a complete victory over an hundred and fifty thousand Turks. This glorious success led him to resume the offensive, and in the following year he laid siege, with forty thousand men, to Belgrade, the great frontier fortress of Turkey, in presence of the whole strength of the Ottoman empire. The obstinate resistance of the Turks, as famous then as they have ever since been, in the defence of fortified places, joined to the dysenteries and fevers usual on the marshy banks of the Danube in the autumnal months, soon reduced his effective force to twenty-five thousand men, while that of the enemy, by prodigious efforts, had been swelled to an hundred and fifty thousand around the besiegers' lines, besides thirty thousand within the walls.

30. Narrow escape from ruin, and wonderful victory at Belgrade.

Every thing presaged that Eugene was about to undergo the fate of Marshal Marsin twelve years before at Turin, and even his most experienced officers deemed a capitulation the only way of extricating them from their perilous situation. Eugene himself was attacked and seriously weakened by the prevailing dysentery, and all seemed lost in the Austrian camp. It was in these circumstances, with this weakened and dispirited force, that he achieved one of the most glorious victories ever gained by the Cross over the Crescent. With admirable skill he collected his little army together, divided it into columns of attack, and though scarcely able to sit on horseback himself, led them to the assault of the Turkish intrenchments. The result was equal to the success of

Cæsar over the Gauls at the blockade of Alesia, seventeen centuries before. The innumerable host of the Turks was totally defeated—all their artillery and baggage was taken, and their troops were entirely dispersed. Belgrade, immediately after, opened its gates, and has since remained, with some mutations of fortune, the great frontier bulwark of Europe against the Turks. The successes which he gained in the following campaign of 1718 were so decisive, that they entirely broke the Ottoman power; and he was preparing to march to Constantinople, when the treaty of Passarowitz put a period to his conquests, and gave a breathing time to the exhausted Ottoman empire.*

31. His character as a general, and parallel to Napoleon.

From this brief sketch of his exploits, it may readily be understood what was the character of Eugene as a general. He had none of the methodical prudence of Turenne, Marlborough, or Villars. His genius was entirely different; it was more akin to that of Napoleon, when he was reduced to counterbalance inferiority of numbers by superiority of skill. The immortal campaigns of 1796 in Italy, and of 1814 in Champagne, bear a strong resemblance to those of Eugene. Like the French Emperor, his strokes were rapid and forcible; his *coup-d'œil* was at once quick and just; his activity indefatigable; his courage undaunted; his resources equal to any undertaking. He did not lay much stress on previous arrangements, and seldom attempted the extensive combinations which enabled Marlborough to command success; but dashed fearlessly

* *Biog. Univ.* xiii. 482–491, (Eugene.)

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on, trusting to his own resources to extricate him out of any difficulty — to his genius, in any circumstances, to command victory.

32. Daring and skill with which he extricated himself from dangers.

Yet was this daring disposition not without peril. His audacity often bordered on rashness, his rapidity on haste; and he repeatedly brought his armies into situations all but desperate, and which, to a general of less capacity, would unquestionably have proved so. But in these difficulties no one could exceed him in the energy and vigour with which he extricated himself from the toils: and many of his greatest victories, particularly those of Turin and Belgrade, were gained under circumstances where even the boldest officers in his army had given him over for lost. He was prodigal of the blood of his soldiers, and, like Napoleon, indifferent to the sacrifices at which he purchased his successes; but he was still more lavish of his own, and never failed to share the hardships and dangers of the meanest of his followers. Engaged during his active life in thirteen pitched battles, in all he fought like a common soldier. He was in consequence repeatedly, sometimes dangerously, wounded; and it was extraordinary that he escaped the reiterated perils to which he was exposed. He raised the Austrian monarchy by his triumphs to the very highest pitch of glory, and finally broke the power of the Turks, the most persevering and not the least formidable of its enemies. But the enterprises which his genius prompted the Cabinet of Vienna to undertake, were beyond the strength of the hereditary states; and for nearly a century after, it accomplished nothing

worthy, either of its growing resources, or of the military renown which he had achieved for it.

33. Early life of Frederick the Great.

FREDERICK II., surnamed THE GREAT, with more justice than any other to whom that title has been applied in modern times, was born at Berlin on the 24th January, 1712. His education was as much neglected as ill-directed. Destined from early youth for the military profession, he was in the first instance subjected to a discipline so rigorous, that he conceived the utmost aversion for a career in which he was ultimately to shine with such eclat, and, as his only resource, threw himself with ardour into the study of French literature, for which he retained a strong predilection through the whole of his subsequent life. Unfortunately his knowledge was almost entirely confined to that literature. That of his own country, since so illustrious, had not started into existence. Of Italian and Spanish he was ignorant. He could not read Greek; and with Latin his acquaintance was so imperfect, as to be of no practical service to him through life. To this unfortunate contraction of his education, his limited taste in literature, in subsequent life, is chiefly to be ascribed. He at first was desirous of espousing an English princess; but his father, who was most imperious in his disposition, decided otherwise, and he was compelled, in 1733, to marry the Princess Elizabeth of Brunswick. This union, like most others contracted under restraint, proved unfortunate; and it did not give Frederick the blessing of an heir to the throne. Debarred from domestic enjoyments, the young prince took refuge with more eagerness

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than ever in literary pursuits; the chateau of Rhinsberg, which was his favourite abode, was styled by him in his transport the "Palace of the Muses;" and the greatest general and most hardy soldier of modern times spent some years of his youth in corresponding with Maupertuis, Voltaire, and other French philosophers, and in making indifferent verses and madrigals, which gave no token of any remarkable genius. He had already prepared for the press a book entitled "Refutation of the Prince of Machiavel," when, in 1740, the death of his father called him to the throne, its duties, its dangers, and its ambition.

34. His accession to the throne, and vigorous application to its duties.

The philosophers were in transports, when they beheld "one of themselves," as they styled him, elevated to a throne; they indulged in hopes that he would continue his literary pursuits, and acknowledge their influence, when surrounded by the attractions, and wielding the patronage of the crown. They soon found their mistake. Frederick retained through life his literary tastes: he corresponded with Voltaire and the philosophers through all his campaigns: he made French verses in his tent, after tracing out the plans of the battles of Leuthen and Rosbach. But his heart was in his kingdom: his ambition was set on its aggrandisement: his passion was war, by which alone that aggrandisement could be achieved. Without being forgotten, the philosophers and madrigals were soon comparatively discarded. The finances and the army occupied his whole attention. The former were in excellent order, and his father had even accumulated a large treasure which

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remained in the exchequer. The army, admirably equipped and disciplined, already amounted to sixty thousand men: he augmented it to eighty thousand. Nothing could exceed the vigour he displayed in every department, or the unceasing attention he paid to public affairs. Indefatigable day and night, sober and temperate in his habits, he employed even artificial means to augment the time during the day he could devote to business. Finding that he was constitutionally inclined to more rest than he deemed consistent with the full discharge of all his regal duties, he ordered his servants to waken him at five in the morning: and if words were not effectual to rouse him from his sleep, he commanded them, on pain of dismissal, to apply linen steeped in cold water to his person. This order was punctually executed, even in the depth of winter, till nature was fairly subdued, and the king had gained the time he desired from his slumbers.

35. His aggression on and conquest of Silesia, and first victory at Mollwitz.

It was not long before he had an opportunity of evincing at once the vigour and unscrupulous character of his mind. The Emperor Charles VI. having died on the 20th October, 1740, the immense possessions of the house of Austria devolved to his daughter, since so famous by the name of MARIA THERESA. The defenceless condition of the imperial dominions, consisting of so many different and discordant states, some of them but recently united under one head, when under the guidance of a young unmarried princess, suggested to the neighbouring powers the idea of a partition. Frederick eagerly united with France in this project. He

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revived some old and obsolete claims of Prussia to Silesia; but in his manifesto to the European powers, upon invading that province, he was scarcely at the pains to conceal the real motives of his aggression. "It is," said he, "an army ready to take the field, treasures long accumulated, and perhaps the desire to acquire glory." He was not long in succeeding in the object of his ambition, though it was at first rather owing to the skill of his generals, and discipline of his soldiers, than to his own capacity. On the 10th April, 1741, the army under his command gained a complete victory over the Austrians, at Mollwitz, in Silesia, which led to the entire reduction of that rich and important province. The king owed little to his own courage, however, on this occasion. Like Wellington, the first essay in arms of so indomitable a hero was unfortunate. He fled from the field of battle at the first repulse of his cavalry; and he was already seven miles off, where he was resting in a mill, when he received intelligence that his troops had regained the day; and at the earnest entreaties of General, afterwards Marshal, Schwerin, he returned to take the command of the army.

36. His glorious successes over the Austrians.

Next year, however, he evinced equal courage and capacity in the battle of Czaslau, which he gained over the Prince of Lorraine. Austria, on the brink of ruin, hastened to disarm the most formidable of her assailants; and by a separate peace, concluded at Breslau on June 11, 1742, she ceded to Prussia nearly the whole of Silesia. This cruel loss, however, was too plainly the result of necessity to be acquiesced in without a struggle

by the Cabinet of Vienna. Maria Theresa made no secret of her determination to resume possession of the lost province on the first convenient opportunity. Austria soon united the whole of Germany in a league against Frederick, who had no ally but the King of France. Assailed by such a host of enemies, however, the young king was not discouraged, and, boldly assuming the initiative, he gained at Hohenfriedberg a complete victory over his old antagonist, the Prince of Lorraine. This triumph was won entirely by the extraordinary genius displayed by the King of Prussia. "It was one of those battles," says the military historian, Guibert, "where a great master makes every thing give way before him, and which is gained from the very beginning, because he never gives the enemy time to recover from their disorder."

37. Who are at length obliged to make peace.

The Austrians made great exertions to repair the consequences of this disaster, and with such success, that in four months Prince Charles of Lorraine again attacked him, at the head of 50,000 men, near Soor. Frederick had not 25,000, but with these he again defeated the Austrians with immense loss, and took up his winter quarters in Silesia. So vast were the resources, however, of the great German League, of which Austria was the head, that they were enabled to keep the field during winter, and even meditated a *coup-de-main* against the king, in his capital of Berlin. Informed of this design, Frederick lost not a moment in anticipating it by a sudden attack on his part on his enemies. Assembling his troops in the depth of winter with perfect secrecy,

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he surprised a large body of Saxons at Naumberg, made himself master of their magazines at Gorlitz, and soon after made his triumphant entry into Dresden, where he dictated a glorious peace, on 25th December 1745, to his enemies, which permanently secured Silesia to Prussia. It was full time for the Imperialists to come to an accommodation. In eighteen months Frederick had defeated them in four pitched battles, besides several combats; taken 45,000 prisoners, and killed or wounded an equal number of his enemies. His own armies had not sustained losses to a fifth part of this amount, and the chasms in his ranks were more than compensated by the multitude of the prisoners who enlisted under his banners, anxious to share the fortunes of the hero who had already filled Europe with his renown.

38. His decided and indomitable character already appears.

The ambitious and decided, and, above all, indomitable character of Frederick, had already become conspicuous during these brief campaigns. His correspondence, all conducted by himself, evinced a vigour and *tranchant* style, at that period unknown in European diplomacy, but to which the world has since been abundantly accustomed in the proclamations of Napoleon. Already he spoke on every occasion as the hero and the conqueror — to conquer or die was his invariable maxim. On the eve of his invasion of Saxony, he wrote to the Empress of Russia, who was endeavouring to dissuade him from that design :—"I wish nothing from the King of Poland (Elector of Saxony) but to punish him in his Electorate, and make him sign an acknowledgment of repentance in his capital." During the negotiations for

peace, he wrote to the King of England, who had proposed the mediation of Great Britian: — "These are my conditions. I will perish with my army before departing from one iota of them: if the Empress does not accept them, I will rise in my demands."

39. His great services to his kingdom during the next ten years of peace.

The peace of Dresden lasted ten years; and these were of inestimable importance to Frederick. He employed that precious interval in consolidating his conquests, securing the affections by protecting the interests of his subjects, and pursuing every design which could conduce to their welfare. Marshes were drained, lands were broken up and cultivated, manufactures established, the finances were put in the best order, and agriculture, as the great staple of the kingdom, was sedulously encouraged. His capital was embellished, and the fame of his exploits attracted the greatest and most celebrated men in Europe. Voltaire, among the rest, became for years his guest; but the aspiring genius and irascible temper of the military monarch could ill accord with the vanity and insatiable thirst for praise of the French author, and they parted with mutual respect but irretrievable alienation. Meanwhile, the strength of the monarchy was daily increasing under Frederick's wise and provident administration. The population nearly reached 6,000,000 of souls; the cavalry mustered 30,000, all in the highest state of discipline and equipment; and the infantry, esteemed with reason the most perfect in Europe, numbered a hundred and twenty thousand bayonets.

These troops had long been accustomed to act to-

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gether in large bodies; the best training next to actual service in the field which an army can receive. They had need of all their skill, and discipline, and courage; for Prussia was ere long threatened by the most formidable confederacy that ever yet had been directed in modern times against a single state. Austria, Russia, France, Sweden, and Saxony, united in alliance for the purpose of partitioning the Prussian territories. These allies had ninety millions of men in their dominions, and could with ease bring four hundred thousand men into the field. Prussia had less than six millions of inhabitants, who were strained to the uttermost to array a hundred and twenty thousand combatants; and even with the aid of England and Hanover, not more than fifty thousand auxiliaries could be relied on. Prussia had neither strong fortresses like Flanders, nor mountain chains like Spain, nor a frontier stream like France. Its territory, open on every side, was entirely composed of flat plains, unprotected by great rivers, and surrounded on the south, east, and north, by its enemies. The contest seemed utterly desperate, and there did not seem a chance of escape for the Prussian monarchy.

40. Coalition of Austria, Russia, France, Saxony, and Sweden against Prussia.

Frederick began the contest by one of those strokes which demonstrated the strength of his understanding and the vigour of his determination. Instead of waiting to be attacked, he carried the war at once into the enemy's territories, and converted the resources of the nearest of them to his own advantage. Having received authentic intelligence of the signature of a treaty for the partition of his kingdom by the great powers, on

41. Frederick invades Saxony and conquers that country.

9th May, 1756, he suddenly entered the Saxon territories, made himself master of Dresden, and shut up the whole forces of Saxony in the intrenched camp at Pirna. Marshal Brown having advanced at the head of sixty thousand men to relieve them, he encountered and totally defeated him at Lowositz, with the loss of fifteen thousand men. Deprived of all hope of succour, the Saxons in Pirna, after having made vain efforts to escape, were obliged to lay down their arms, still fourteen thousand strong. The whole of Saxony submitted to the victor, who thenceforward, during the whole war, turned its entire resources to his own support. Beyond all question, it was this masterly and successful stroke, in the very outset, and in the teeth of his enemies, which added above a third to his warlike resources, and enabled him subsequently to maintain his ground against the desperate odds by which he was assailed. Most of the Saxons taken at Pirna, dazzled by their conqueror's fame, entered his service: the Saxon youth hastened in crowds to enrol themselves under the banners of the hero of the North of Germany. Frederick, at the same time, effectually vindicated the step he had taken in the eyes of all Europe, by the publication of the secret treaty of partition, which he had discovered in the archives at Dresden, in spite of the efforts of the electress to conceal it. Whatever might have been the case in the former war, when he seized on Silesia, it was apparent to the world that he now, at least, was strictly in the right, and that his invasion of Saxony was not less justifiable on the score of public morality, than

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important in its consequences to the great contest in which he was engaged.

42. He defeats the Austrians at Prague, and is defeated at Kolin.

The Allies made the utmost efforts to regain the advantages they had lost. France, instead of the twenty-four thousand men she was bound to furnish by the treaty of partition, put a hundred thousand on foot; the Diet of Ratisbon placed sixty thousand troops of the empire at the disposal of Austria; but Frederick still preserved the ascendant. Breaking into Bohemia, in March 1757, he defeated the Austrians in a great battle under the walls of Prague, shut up forty thousand of their best troops in that town, and soon reduced them to such extremities, that it was evident, if not succoured, they must surrender. The cabinet of Vienna made the greatest efforts for their relief. Marshal Daun, whose cautious and scientific policy was peculiarly calculated to thwart the designs, and baffle the audacity of his youthful antagonist, advanced at the head of sixty thousand men to their relief. Frederick advanced to meet them with less than twenty thousand combatants. He attacked the Imperialists in a strong position at Kolin, on the 18th July, and, for the first time in his life, met with a bloody defeat. His army, especially that division commanded by his brother, the prince-royal, sustained severe losses in the retreat, which became unavoidable, out of Bohemia; and the king confessed in his private correspondence, that an honourable death alone remained to him.

Disaster accumulated on every side. The English and Hanoverian army, his only allies, capitulated at Closterseven, and left the French army, sixty thousand

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43. Desperate situation of the Prussian monarchy.

strong, at liberty to follow the Prussians; the French and the troops of the empire, with the Duke of Richelieu at their head, menaced Magdeburg, where the royal family of Prussia had taken refuge, and advanced towards Dresden. The Russians, seventy thousand strong, were making serious progress on the side of Poland, and had recently defeated the Prussians opposed to them. The king was put to the ban of the empire; and the army of the empire, mustering forty thousand, was moving against him. Four huge armies, each stronger than his own, were advancing to crush a prince who could not collect thirty thousand men round his banners. At that period he carried a sure poison always with him, determined not to fall alive into the hands of his enemies. He seriously contemplated suicide, and gave vent to the mournful, but yet heroic, sentiments with which he was inspired, in a letter to Voltaire, terminating with the lines—

> Pour moi, menaçé de naufrage,
> Je dois, en affrontant l'orage,
> Penser, vivre, et mourir en roi.

44. The King's marvellous victories at Rosbach and Leuthen.

Then it was that the astonishing vigour and powers of his mind shone forth with their full lustre. Collecting hastily twenty-five thousand men out of his shattered battalions, he marched against the Prince of Soubise, who, at the head of an army of sixty thousand French and Imperial troops, was advancing against him through Thuringia, and totally defeated him, with the loss of eighteen thousand men, on the memorable field of Rosbach. Hardly was this triumph achieved, when he

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was called, with his indefatigable followers, to stem the progress of the Prince of Lorraine and Marshal Daun, who were making the most alarming progress in Silesia. Schweidnitz, its capital, had fallen: a large body of Prussians, under the Duke de Bevorn, had been defeated at Breslau. That rich and important province seemed on the point of falling again into the hands of the Austrians, when Frederick reinstated his affairs, which seemed wholly desperate, by one of those astonishing strokes which distinguish him, perhaps, above any general of modern times. In the depth of winter he attacked, at Leuthen, on the 5th December, 1757, Marshal Daun and the Prince of Lorraine,—who had sixty thousand admirable troops under their orders,—and, by the skilful application of the *oblique* method of attack, defeated them entirely, with the loss of thirty thousand men, of whom eighteen thousand were prisoners! It was the greatest victory that had been gained in Europe since the battle of Blenheim. Its effects were immense: the Austrians were driven headlong out of Silesia; Schweidnitz was regained; the King of Prussia, pursuing them, carried the war into Moravia, and laid siege to Olmutz; and England, awakening, at the voice of Chatham, from its unworthy slumber, refused to ratify the capitulation of Closterseven, resumed the war on the continent with more vigour than ever, and intrusted its direction to Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who soon rivalled Turenne in the skill and science of his methodical warfare.

But it was the destiny of the King of Prussia — a

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destiny which displayed his great qualities in their full lustre — to be perpetually involved in difficulties, from the enormous numerical preponderance of his enemies, or the misfortunes of the lieutenants to whom his subordinate armies were intrusted. Frederick could not be personally present everywhere at the same time; and wherever he was absent, disaster revealed the overwhelming superiority of the force by which he was assailed. The siege of Olmutz, commenced in March 1758, proved unfortunate. The battering train at the disposal of the king, was unequal to its reduction, and it became necessary to raise it on the approach of Daun with a formidable Austrian army. During this unsuccessful irruption into the south, the Russians had been making alarming progress in the north-east, where the feeble force opposed to them was well-nigh overwhelmed by their enormous superiority of numbers. Frederick led back the flower of his army from Olmutz, in Moravia, crossed all Silesia and Prussia, and encountered the sturdy barbarians at Zorndorf, defeating them with the loss of seventeen thousand men, an advantage which delivered the eastern provinces of the monarchy from this formidable invasion. This victory was dearly purchased, however, by the sacrifice of ten thousand of his own best soldiers.

45. Disasters sustained by his troops in other quarters, and victory of Zorndorf.

But, during the king's absence, Prince Henry of Prussia, whom he had left in command of sixteen thousand men, to keep Marshal Daun in check, was well-nigh overwhelmed by that able commander, who was again at the head of an army of fifty thousand. Frederick

46. Frederick's defeat at Hohenkirchen.

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flew back to his support, and, having joined his brother, took post at Hohenkirchen. The position was unfavourable: the army inferior to the enemy. "If Daun does not attack us here," said Marshal Keith, "he deserves to be hanged." "I hope," answered Frederick, "he will be more afraid of us than the rope." The Austrian veteran, however, saw his advantage, and attacked the Prussians during the night with such skill, that he threw them into momentary confusion, took one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and drove them from their ground, with the loss of seven thousand men. Then it was that the courage and genius of the king shone forth with their full lustre. Though grievously wounded in the conflict, and after having seen his best generals fall around him, he rallied his troops at daybreak, formed them in good order behind the village which had been surprised, and led them leisurely to a position a mile from the field of conflict, where he offered battle to the enemy, who did not venture to accept it. Having remained two days in this position, to re-organise his troops, he decamped, raised the siege of Neiss, and succeeded in taking up his winter quarters at Breslau, in the very middle of the province he had wrested from the enemy.

47. Terrible battle of Cunnersdorf, in which Frederick is defeated.

The campaign of 1759 was still more perilous to Frederick; but, if possible, it displayed his extraordinary talents in still brighter colours. He began by observing the Austrians, under Daun and the Prince of Lorraine, in Silesia, and reserved his strength to combat the Russians, who were advancing, eighty thousand strong,

through East Prussia. Frederick attacked them at Cunnersdorf, with forty thousand only, in an intrenched position, guarded by two hundred pieces of cannon. The first onset of the Prussians was entirely successful: they forced the front line of the Russian intrenchment, and took seventy-two pieces of cannon. The victory seemed gained: he wrote to Berlin that they might soon expect to hear of a glorious triumph. But the situation of the king was such, pressed on all sides by superior armies, that he could not stop short with ordinary success; and, in the attempt to gain a decisive victory, he had well-nigh lost all. The heroism of his troops was shattered against the strength of the second line of the Russians; a large body of Austrians came up to their support during the battle, and, after having exhausted all the resources of courage and genius, he was driven from the field with the loss of twenty thousand men and all his artillery.

48. Overwhelming misfortunes in other quarters.

The Russians lost eighteen thousand men in this terrible battle, the most bloody which had been fought for centuries in Europe, and were in no condition to follow up their victory. Other misfortunes, however, in appearance overwhelming, succeeded each other. General Schmettau capitulated in Dresden; and General Finch, with seventeen thousand men, was obliged to lay down his arms in the defiles of the Bohemian mountains. All seemed lost; but the king still persevered, and the victory of Minden enabled Prince Ferdinand to detach twelve thousand men to his support. The Prussians nobly stood by their heroic sovereign in the hour of trial;

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new levies supplied the wide chasms in his ranks. Frederick's great skill averted all future disasters, and the campaign of 1759, the *fourth* of the war, concluded with the king still in possession of all his dominions in the midst of the enormous forces of his enemies.

49. Victory of Frederick over Laudon at Lignetz.

The campaign of 1760 began in March by another disaster at Landshech, where ten thousand Prussians were cut to pieces under one of his generals, and the important fortress of Glatz was invested by the Austrians. Frederick advanced to relieve it; but soon remeasured his steps to attempt the siege of Dresden. Daun, in his turn, followed him, and obliged the Prussian monarch to raise the siege. Frederick then resumed his march into Silesia, closely followed by three armies, each more numerous than his own, under Laudon, Daun, and Lacey, without their being able to obtain the slightest advantage over him. Laudon, the most active of them, attempted to surprise him; but Frederick was aware of his design, and received the attacking columns at Lignetz in so masterly a manner, that they were totally defeated, with the loss of 12,000 men.

50. Dreadful battle, and victory of the Prussians at Torgau.

Scarcely had he achieved this victory, when he had to make head against Lacy, withstand Daun, repel an enormous body of Russians, who were advancing through East Prussia, and deliver Berlin, which had been a second time occupied by his enemies. Driven to desperate measures by such an unparalleled succession of dangers, he extricated himself from them by the terrible battle and extraordinary victory of Torgau, on November 3, 1761, in which, after a dreadful struggle,

he defeated Daun, though intrenched to the teeth, with the loss of twenty-five thousand men—an advantage dearly purchased by the loss of eighteen thousand of his own brave soldiers. But this victory saved the Prussian monarchy: Daun, severely wounded in the battle, retired to Vienna; the army withdrew into Bohemia; two-thirds of Saxony was regained by the Prussians; the Russians and Swedes retired; Berlin was delivered from the enemy; and the fifth campaign terminated with the unconquerable monarch still in possession of nearly his whole dominions.

51. Desperate state of Prussia at this time.

The military strength of Prussia was now all but exhausted by the unparalleled and heroic efforts she had made. Frederick has left us the following picture of the state of his kingdom and army at this disastrous period: —"Our condition at that period can only be likened to that of a man riddled with balls, weakened by the loss of blood, and ready to sink under the weight of his sufferings. The noblesse was exhausted, the lower people ruined; numbers of villages burnt, many towns destroyed; a complete anarchy had overturned the whole order and police of government; in a word, desolation was universal. The army was in no better situation. *Seventeen pitched battles* had mowed down the flower of the officers and soldiers; the regiments were broken down, and composed in part of deserters and prisoners; order had disappeared, and discipline relaxed to such a degree that the old infantry was little better than a body of newly raised militia." * Necessity, not less than prudence, in these circumstances, which to any

* *Histoire de mon Temps*, par Frederick IV., p. 174.

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other man would have seemed desperate, prescribed a cautious defensive policy; and it is doubtful whether in it his greatness did not appear more conspicuous than in the bolder parts of his former career.

52. Operations in the camp of Bunzelwitz in 1761.

The campaign of 1761 passed in skilful marches and countermarches, without his numerous enemies being able to obtain a single advantage, where the king commanded in person. He was now, literally speaking, assailed on all sides; the immense masses of the Austrians and Russians were converging to one point; and Frederick, who could not muster forty thousand men under his banners, found himself assailed by one hundred thousand Allies, whom six campaigns had trained to perfection in the military art. It seemed impossible he could escape; yet he did so, and compelled his enemies to retire without gaining the slightest advantage over him. Taking post in an intrenched camp at Bunzelwitz, fortified with the utmost skill, defended with the utmost vigilance, he succeeded in maintaining himself and providing food for his troops for two months within cannon-shot of the enormous masses of the Russians and Austrians, till want of provisions obliged them to separate. "It has just come to this," said Frederick, "who will starve first?" He made his enemies do so. Burning with shame, they were forced to retire to their respective territories, so that he was enabled to take up his winter quarters at Breslau in Silesia. But, during this astonishing struggle, disaster had accumulated in other quarters. His camp at Bunzelwitz had only been maintained by concentrating in it nearly the whole strength of the monarchy,

and its more distant provinces suffered severely under the drain. Schweidnitz, the capital of Silesia, was surprised by the Austrians, with its garrison of 4000 men. Prince Henry, after the loss of Dresden, had the utmost difficulty in maintaining himself in the part of Saxony which still remained to the Prussians; in Silesia they had lost all but Glogau, Breslau, and Neiss; and, to complete his misfortune, the dismissal of Lord Chatham from office in England had led to the stoppage of the wonted subsidy of £750,000 a-year. The resolution of the king did not sink, but his judgment almost despaired of success under such a complication of disasters. Determined not to yield, he discovered a conspiracy at his head-quarters to seize him, and deliver him to his enemies. Dreading such a calamity more than death, he carried with him, as formerly in similar circumstances, a sure poison, intended, in the last extremity, to terminate his days.

53. The death of the Empress of Russia restores his affairs.

"Nevertheless," as he himself said, "affairs which seemed desperate, in reality were not so; and perseverance at length surmounted every peril." Fortune often, in real life, as well as in romance, favours the brave. In the case of Frederick, however, it would be unjust to say he was favoured by Fortune. On the contrary, she long proved adverse to him; and he recovered her smiles only by heroically persevering till the ordinary chances of human affairs turned in his favour. He accomplished what in serious cases is the great aim of medicine; he made the patient survive the disease. In the winter of 1761, the Empress of Russia

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died, and was succeeded by Peter III. That prince had long conceived the most ardent admiration for Frederick, and he manifested it in the most decisive manner on his accession to the throne, by not only withdrawing from the alliance, but uniting his forces with those of Prussia against Austria. This great event speedily changed the face of affairs. The united Prussians and Russians under Frederick, seventy thousand strong, retook Schweidnitz in the face of Daun, who had only sixty thousand men; and, although the sudden death of the Czar Peter in a few months deprived him of the aid of his powerful neighbours, yet Russia took no farther part in the contest. France, exhausted and defeated in every quarter of the globe by England, could render no aid to Austria, upon whom the whole weight of the contest fell. It was soon apparent that she was overmatched by the Prussian hero. Relieved from the load which had so long oppressed him, Frederick vigorously resumed the offensive. Silesia was wholly regained by the king in person; the battle of Freyberg gave his brother, Prince Henry, the ascendant in Saxony: and the cabinet of Vienna, seeing the contest hopeless, were glad to make peace at Hubertsbourg, on 15th February, 1763, on terms which, besides Silesia, left entire the whole dominions of the King of Prussia.

54. Wonderful result of the struggle.

He entered Berlin in triumph after six years' absence, in an open chariot, with Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick seated by his side. No words can paint the enthusiasm of the spectators at the august spectacle, or the admiration with which they regarded the

hero who had filled the world with his renown. It was no wonder they were proud of their sovereign. His like had never been seen since the fall of the Roman empire. He had founded and saved a kingdom. He had conquered Europe in arms. With six millions of subjects he had vanquished powers possessing ninety millions. He had created a new era in the art of war. His people were exhausted, pillaged, ruined; their numbers had declined a tenth during the contest. But what then? They had come victorious out of a struggle unparalleled in modern times: the halo of Leuthen and Rosbach, of Zorndorf and Torgau, played round their bayonets; they were inspired with the energy which so speedily repairs any disaster. Frederick wisely and magnanimously laid aside the sword when he resumed the pacific sceptre. His subsequent reign was almost entirely spent in tranquillity; all the wounds of war were speedily healed under his sage and beneficent administration. Before his death, his subjects had been doubled, the national wealth had been made triple of what it had been at the commencement of his reign; and Prussia now boasts of sixteen millions of inhabitants, and a population increasing faster in numbers and resources than that of any other state in Europe.

55. His character as a general.

No laboured character, no studied eulogium, can paint Frederick like this brief and simple narrative of his exploits. It places him at once at the head of modern generals,—if Hannibal be excepted, perhaps of ancient and modern. He was not uniformly successful: on the contrary, he sustained several dreadful defeats.

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But that arose from the enormous superiority of force by which he was assailed, and the desperate state of his affairs, which were generally so pressing, that even a respite in one quarter could be obtained only by a victory instantly gained, under whatever circumstances, in another. What appears rashness was often in him the height of wisdom. He had no parliament or coalition to consider, no adverse faction was on the watch to convert casual disaster into the means of ruin. He was at liberty to take counsel only from his own heroic breast. He could protract the struggle, however, by no other means but strong and vigorous strokes, and the lustre of instant success, and they could not be dealt out without the risk of receiving as many. The fact of his maintaining the struggle against such desperate odds proves the general wisdom of his policy. No man ever made more skilful use of an interior line of communication, or flew with such rapidity from one threatened part of his dominions to another. None ever, by the force of skill in tactics and sagacity in strategy, gained such astonishing successes with forces so inferior. And if some generals have committed fewer faults, none were impelled by such desperate circumstances to a hazardous course; and none had ever greater magnanimity in confessing and explaining them for the benefit of future times.

56. Comparison of Frederick and Napoleon.

The only general in modern times who can bear a comparison with Frederick, if the difficulties of his situation are considered, is Napoleon. It is a part only of his campaigns, however, which sustains the analogy. There is no resemblance between the mighty conqueror

pouring down the valley of the Danube, at the head of one hundred and eighty thousand men, invading Russia with five hundred thousand, or overrunning Spain with three hundred thousand, and Frederick the Great, with thirty thousand or forty thousand, turning every way against quadruple the number of Austrians, French, Swedes, and Russians. Yet a part, and the most brilliant part of Napoleon's career, bears a close resemblance to that of the Prussian hero. In Lombardy in 1796, in Saxony in 1813, and in the plain of Champaigne in 1814, he was upon the whole inferior in force to his opponents, and owed the superiority which he generally enjoyed on the point of attack, to the rapidity of his movements, and the skill with which, like Frederick, he availed himself of an interior line of communication. His immortal campaign in France in 1814, in particular, where he bore up with seventy thousand men against two hundred and fifty thousand enemies, bears the closest resemblance to those which Frederick sustained for six years against the forces of the Coalition. Both were often to appearance rash, because the affairs of each were so desperate that nothing could save them but an audacious policy. Both were indomitable in resolution, and preferred ruin and death to sitting down on a dishonoured throne. Both were from the outset of the struggle placed in circumstances apparently hopeless, and each succeeded in protracting it solely by his astonishing talent and resolution. The fate of the two was widely different: the one transmitted an honoured and aggrandised throne to his successors; the other, overthrown and discrowned, terminated his days on the

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rock of St Helena. But success is not always the test of real merit: the verdict of ages is often different from the judgment or fate of present times. Hannibal conquered, has left a greater name among men than Scipio victorious. In depth of thought, force of genius, variety of information, and splendour of success, Frederick will bear no comparison with Napoleon. But Frederick's deeds, as a general, were more extraordinary than those of the French emperor, because he bore up longer against greater odds. It is the highest praise of Napoleon to say, that he did in one campaign—his last and greatest—what Frederick had done in six.

57. Of Marlborough and Wellington.

If the campaigns of Eugene and Frederick suggest a comparison with those of Napoleon, those of Marlborough challenge a parallel with those of the other great commander of our day—Wellington. Their political and military situations were in many respects alike. Both combated at the head of the forces of a coalition, composed of dissimilar nations, actuated by separate interests, inflamed by different passions. Both had the utmost difficulty in soothing the jealousies and stifling the selfishness of these nations; and both found themselves often more seriously impeded by the allied cabinets in their rear, than by the enemy's forces in their front. Both were the generals of a nation which, albeit covetous of military glory, and proud of warlike renown, is to the last degree impatient of previous preparation; which ever frets at the cost of wars, that its political position renders unavoidable, or that in its ambitious spirit it had readily undertaken. Both were compelled to husband the blood of their soldiers, and

spare the resources of their governments, from the consciousness that they had already been strained to the uttermost in the cause, and that any further demands would render the war so unpopular as speedily to lead to its termination. The career of both occurred at a time when political passions were strongly roused in their country; when the war in which they were engaged was waged against the inclination, and, in appearance at least, against the interests, of a large and powerful party at home, who sympathised from political feeling with their enemies, and were ready to decry every success and magnify every disaster of their own arms, from a secret feeling that their party elevation was identified rather with the successes of the enemy than with those of their own countrymen. The Tories were to Marlborough precisely what the Whigs were to Wellington. Both were opposed to the armies of the most powerful monarch, led by the most renowned generals of Europe, whose forces, preponderating over those of the adjoining states, had come to threaten the liberties of all Europe, and against whom there had at last been formed a general coalition, to restrain the ambition from which so much detriment had already been experienced.

58. Points in which their situations differed.

But while in these respects the two British heroes were placed very much in the same circumstances, in other particulars, not less material, their situations were widely different. Marlborough had never any difficulties in the field to struggle with, approaching those which beset Wellington. By great exertions, both on his own

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part and that of the British and Dutch government, his force was generally almost equal to that with which he had to contend. It was often exactly so. War at that period, in the Low Countries at least, consisted chiefly of a single battle during a campaign, followed by the siege of two or three frontier fortresses. The number of strongholds with which the country bristled, rendered any further or more extensive operations, in general, impossible. This state of matters at once rendered success more probable to a general of superior abilities, and made it more easy to repair disaster. No vehement passions had been roused, bringing whole nations into the field, and giving one state, where they had burnt the fiercest, a vast superiority in point of numbers over its more pacific or less excited neighbours. But in all these respects, the circumstances in which Wellington was placed were not only not parallel—they were contrasted. From first to last, in the Peninsula, he was enormously outnumbered by the enemy. Until the campaign of 1813, when his force in the field was, for the first time, equal to that of the French, the superiority to which he was opposed was so prodigious, that the only surprising thing is, how he was not driven into the sea at the very first encounter.

59. Great superiority of force with which Wellington had to contend.

While the French had never less than two hundred thousand effective troops at their disposal, after providing for all their garrisons and communications, the English general had never more than thirty thousand effective British, and twenty thousand Portuguese around his standard. The French were directed by the

Emperor who, intent on the subjugation of the Peninsula, and wielding the inexhaustible powers given by the conscription for the supply of his armies, cared not though he lost a hundred thousand men in every campaign, provided he purchased success by their sacrifice. Wellington was supported at home by a government which, raising its soldiers by voluntary enrolment, could with difficulty supply a drain of fifteen thousand men a-year from their ranks for service in every quarter of the globe. He was watched by a party which decried every advantage, and magnified every disaster, in order to induce the entire withdrawal of the troops from the Peninsula. Napoleon sent into Spain a host of veterans trained in fifteen years' combats, who had carried the French standards into every capital of Europe. Wellington led to their encounter troops admirably disciplined, indeed, but almost all unacquainted with actual war, and having often to learn the rudiments even of the most necessary field operations in presence of the enemy. Marlborough's troops, though heterogeneous and dissimilar, had been trained to their practical duties in the preceding wars under William III., and brought into the field a degree of experience noways inferior to that of their opponents. Bolingbroke tells us that, from the very outset of his command, in the wars of the Succession, Marlborough placed his main reliance on this circumstance. Whoever weighs with impartiality those different circumstances, cannot avoid arriving at the conclusion, that as Wellington's

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difficulties were incomparably more formidable than Marlborough's, so his merit, in surmounting them, was proportionally greater.

60. Their respective characteristics.

Though similar in many respects, so far as the general conduct of their campaigns is concerned, from the necessity under which both laboured of husbanding the blood of their soldiers, the military qualities of England's two chiefs were essentially different, and each possessed some points in which he was superior to the other. By nature Wellington was more daring than Marlborough, and though soon constrained, by necessity, to adopt a cautious system, he continued, throughout all his career, to incline more to a hazardous policy than his great predecessor. The intrepid advance and fight at Assaye; the crossing of the Douro and movement on Talavera in 1809; the advance to Madrid and Burgos in 1812; the actions before Bayonne in 1813; the desperate stand made at Waterloo in 1815—place this beyond a doubt. Marlborough never hazarded so much on the success of a single enterprise: he ever aimed at compassing his objects by skill and combination, rather than risking them on the chance of arms. Wellington was a mixture of Turenne and Eugene: Marlborough was the perfection of the Turenne school alone. No man could fight more ably and gallantly than Marlborough: his talent and rapidity of eye in tactics were, at least, equal to his skill in strategy and previous combination. But he was not partial to such desperate passages at arms, and never resorted to them but from necessity, or when

encouraged by a happy opportunity for striking a blow. The proof of this is decisive. Marlborough, during ten campaigns, fought only five pitched battles. Wellington, in seven, fought fifteen, in every one of which he proved victorious.*

61. Wellington's policy was more daring but more hazardous than Marlborough's.

Marlborough's consummate generalship throughout his whole career, kept him out of disaster. It was said, with justice, that he never fought a battle which he did not gain, nor laid siege to a town which he did not take. He took above twenty fortified places of the first order, generally in presence of an enemy's army superior to his own. Wellington's bolder disposition more frequently involved him in peril, and on some occasions caused serious losses to his army; but they were the price at which he purchased his transcendent successes. Wellington's bolder strategy gained for him advantages which the more circumspect measures of his predecessor never could have attained. Marlborough would never, with scarcely any artillery, have hazarded the attack on Burgos, nor incurred the perilous chances of the retreat from that town; but he never would have delivered the South of the Peninsula in a single campaign, by throwing himself, with forty thousand men, upon the communications in the North, of an hundred and fifty thousand. It is hard to say which was the greater general, if their merits in the field alone are considered; but Wellington's successes

* Viz.: Vimiera, the Douro, Talavera, Busaco, Fuentes d'Onoro, Salamanca, Vittoria, the Pyrenees, the Bidassoa, the Nive, the Nivelle, Orthes, Toulouse, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo.

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were the more vital to his country, for they delivered it from the greater peril; and they were more honourable to himself, for they were achieved against greater odds. And his fame, in future times, will be proportionally brighter; for the final overthrow of Napoleon, and the destruction of the revolutionary power, in a single battle, present an object of surpassing interest, to which there is nothing in history, perhaps, parallel, and which, to the latest generation, will fascinate the minds of men.

62. Marlborough made more use of cavalry than Wellington, and why?

Marlborough laid great stress on cavalry in war; his chief successes in the field were owing to the skilful use made of a powerful reserve body of horse in the decisive point, and at the decisive moment. It was thus that he overthrew the French centre at Blenheim, by the charge of six thousand cavalry headed by himself in person, in the interval between that village and Oberglau; struck the decisive blow at Ramilies by the charge of a reserve of twenty squadrons drawn from the rear of the right; and broke through the formidable intrenchments at Malplaquet, by instantly following up the irruption of Lord Orkney into the centre of the lines by a vigorous charge of thirty squadrons of cavalry in at the opening. The proportion of horse to infantry was much greater in his armies than it has since been in the British service; it was never under eighty, and at last as high as an hundred and sixty squadrons, which, at the usual rate of a hundred and fifty to a squadron, must, when complete, have mustered twelve and twenty-four thousand

sabres. This was from a fourth to a fifth of their amount at each time. His horse, in great part composed of the steady German dragoons, was in general of the very best description. Wellington's victories were, for the most part, less owing to the action of cavalry; but that was because the country, which was the theatre of war, —Portugal, Spain, and the South of France—was commonly too rocky or mountainous to admit of the use of horse on an extended scale, and he had not nearly so large a body of cavalry at his disposal. Where they could be rendered available, he made the best use of this powerful arm: as was shown in Le Marchant's noble charge at Salamanca; Bock's with the heavy Germans next day; and Ponsonby's and Somerset's at Waterloo. In recent times, and especially since the campaigns of Frederick the Great, the importance of cavalry has been too much under-rated by military men. Napoleon had the highest opinion of the value of cavalry in war; he constantly said, that if the courage and leading on both sides were equal, horse should break the steadiest infantry. Almost all his great victories—Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, Borodino, Dresden, Montmirail, Vauchamps—were owing to the terrible charge at the close of the day by Murat or his successors, with his immense body of heavy horse. This vehemence all but reft the day from the British at Waterloo; opposed by any other infantry it unquestionably would have done so. Hannibal's victories were all gained by his Numidian cavalry; the sight of the uniform of two or three of them was sufficient after Cannæ to make a whole Roman legion stand to arms.

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This is adverse to the general doctrine of military men at this period, but there are phases in opinion on war as in other things; what is commonly thought at a particular time is not always right. The recent victories of Aliwal and Sobraon in India have gone far to shake the validity of the more current opinion; and if authority is to decide the matter, he is a bold man who gainsays the united judgment of Hannibal, Marlborough, and Napoleon.

63. Marlborough was more successful than Wellington in sieges, and why?

Marlborough was more fortunate than Wellington, perhaps more so than any general of modern times, in sieges. He took twenty of the strongest places in Europe in presence of an enemy's army, always equal, generally superior to his own; he never once laid siege to a fortress that he did not subdue. His reduction of Lille, with its noble garrison of fifteen thousand men, in presence of Vendôme at the head of an hundred and twenty thousand, was the most wonderful achievement of the kind which modern Europe had witnessed. Wellington was less fortunate in this branch of warfare. He made three successful sieges, those of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and St Sebastian; but he sustained three bloody repulses, at Badajoz in 1811, Burgos in 1812, and St Sebastian in the first siege in 1813. But in justice to Wellington, the essential difference between his situation and that of Marlborough in this respect must be considered. The latter carried on the war in Flanders close to the strongholds of Austria and Holland, at no great distance from the arsenals of England, and with the facilities of water-carriage in general for

bringing up his battering trains. His troops, trained by experience in the long war which terminated with the peace of Ryswick, in 1697, had become as expert as their enemies in all the branches of the military art. Wellington carried on the war at a great distance from the resources of Great Britain, with little aid from the inefficient or distracted councils of Portugal or Spain, in a mountainous country, where water communication could only penetrate a short way into the interior, in presence of an enemy's force always double, often triple, his own, and with troops whom a century of domestic peace, bought by Marlborough's victories, had caused so completely to forget the practical details of war, that even some of the best of the general officers, when they embarked for the Peninsula, had to be told what a ravelin and a counterscarp were.* He was compelled by the pressure of time, and the approach of forces greatly superior to his own, to make assaults as his last chance, when the breaches were scarcely practicable, and the parapets and defences around them had not even been knocked away. The attacks on Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were not regular sieges; they were sudden assaults on strong places by a sort of *coup-de-main*, under circumstances where methodical approaches were impossible. Whoever weighs these circumstances, so far from wondering at

* This was literally true of the generals of infantry. Picton, whose gallant assault won the castle of Badajoz, and closed its terrible siege, spent some days with a celebrated officer, still alive, whose knowledge of fortification and gunnery is well known, in learning the rudiments of fortification and the attack of places.

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the chequered fortune of Wellington in sieges, will rather be surprised that he was successful at all.

64. Great and remarkable land triumphs of England over France.

The examination of the comparative merits of these two illustrious generals, and the enumeration of the names of their glorious triumphs, suggests one reflection of a very peculiar kind. That England is a maritime power, that the spirit of her inhabitants is essentially nautical, and that the sea is the element on which her power has chiefly been developed, need be told to none who reflect on the magnitude of her present colonial empire, and how long she has wielded the empire of the waves. The French are the first to tell us that her strength is confined to that element; that she is, at land, only a third-rate power; and that the military career does not suit the genius of her people. How, then, has it happened that England, the nautical power, and little inured to land operations, has inflicted greater wounds upon France by *military* success, than any other power, and that in almost all the pitched battles which the two nations have fought, during five centuries, the English have proved victorious? That England's military force is absorbed in the defence of a colonial empire which encircles the earth, is indeed certain; and, in every age, the impatience of taxation in her people has starved down her military establishment, during peace, to so low a point, as rendered the occurrence of disaster, in the first years subsequent to the breaking out of war, a matter of certainty. On the other hand, the military spirit of her neighbours has almost constantly kept theirs at the level which ensures early success. Yet with all

these disadvantages, and with a population which, down to the close of the last war, was little more than half that of France, she has inflicted far greater *land* disasters on her redoubtable neighbour than all the military monarchies of Europe put together.

65. Long series of land disasters sustained by France from England.

English armies, for a hundred and twenty years, ravaged France; but England has not seen the fires of a French camp since the battle of Hastings. English troops have twice taken the French capital; an English king was crowned at Paris; a French king rode captive through London; a French emperor died in English captivity, and his remains were surrendered by English generosity. Twice the English horse marched from Calais to the Pyrenees; once from the Pyrenees to Calais; the monuments of Napoleon in the French capital at this moment, owe their preservation from German revenge to an English general. All the great disasters and days of mourning for France, since the battle of Hastings,—Tenchebray, Cressy, Poitiers, Azincour, Verneuil, Crevont, Blenheim, Oudenarde, Ramilies, Malplaquet, Minden, Dettingen, Quebec, Egypt, Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Orthes, the Pyrenees, Waterloo,—were gained by English generals, and won, for the most part, by English soldiers. Even at Fontenoy, the greatest victory over England of which France can boast since Hastings, every regiment in the French army was, on their own admission, routed by the terrible English column, and victory was snatched from its grasp solely by want of support on the part of the Dutch and Austrians. No coalition against France has ever been successful, in

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which England did not take a prominent part; none, in the end, has failed of gaining its objects, in which she stood foremost in the fight. This fact is so apparent on the most superficial survey of history, that it is admitted by the ablest French historians, though they profess themselves unable to explain it.

66. What have been the causes of this?

Is it that there is a degree of hardihood and courage in the Anglo-Saxon race, which renders them, without the benefit of previous experience in war, adequate to the conquest, on land, even of the most warlike Continental military nations? Is it that the quality of dogged resolution, determination not to be conquered,—*bottom*, in the familiar English phrase,—is of such value in war, that it compensates almost any degree of inferiority in the practical acquaintance with war? Is it that the North brings forth a bolder race of men than the South, and that, other things being equal, the people nursed under a more rigorous climate will vanquish those of a more genial? Is it that the free spirit which, in every age, has distinguished the English people, has communicated a degree of vigour and resolution to their warlike operations, which has rendered them so often victorious in land fights, albeit nautical and commercial in their ideas, over their military neighbours? Or is it, that this courage in war, and this vigour in peace, and this passion for freedom at all times, arise from, and are but symptoms of, an ardent and aspiring disposition, imprinted by Nature on the race to whom the dominion of half the globe has been destined? Experience has not yet determined to which of these causes this most

extraordinary fact has been owing; but it is one upon which our military neighbours, and especially the French, would do well to ponder, now that the population of the British isles will, on the next census, be *thirty millions*. If England has done such things in Continental warfare, with an army which never brought fifty thousand native British sabres and bayonets into the field, what would be the result if national distress or necessities, or a change in the objects of general desire, were to send two hundred thousand?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PEACE OF UTRECHT.

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1. Moral character of the Duke of Marlborough's wars.

THE wars in which the Duke of Marlborough was engaged, were not contests produced merely by the ambitions of Kings, or the rivalry of Ministers. They were not waged for the acquisition of a province, or the capture of a fortress. They were not incurred, like those of Frederick, for the gain of Silesia, or impelled to, like those of Charles XII., by the thirst for glory. Great moral principles were involved in the contest. The League of Augsburg, which terminated in the peace of Ryswick, and first put a bridle on the ambition of France, was the direct and immediate consequence of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the exile of the persecuted Protestants by Louis XIV. The War of the Succession arose unavoidably from this selfish ambition, and desire to appropriate the whole magnificent spoils of the Spanish monarchy, which he had won by diplomatic astuteness, for the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon. The great interests of religious freedom and national independence were at stake in the struggle.

Freedom of thought, emancipation from Romish tyranny, liberty in the choice of worship, the preaching of

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2. Opposite interests and causes for which the parties contended.

the Gospel to the poor, were borne aloft on Marlborough's banners; national independence, death to the Bourbons, hatred to France, were inscribed on those of Eugene. The Church of Rome, indeed, had few more faithful subjects than the house of Hapsburg; but dread of the ambition of Louis XIV., and the glittering prospect of the Spanish succession, had brought her Catholic sovereigns into a close union with the Protestants of the north; and the admirable temper and judgment of the English and Austrian chiefs kept their troops in a state of concord and amity, rarely witnessed in the best cemented alliances. Feudal honour, chivalrous loyalty, the unity of the Church, were the principles which had roused the armies and directed the councils of Louis XIV. The exaltation of France, the glory of their sovereign, the spoils of Spain, awakened the ambition of its government, and animated the spirit of its people. The influence of these opposite principles was felt not only in the council, but in the field; not only in the minister's cabinet, but in the soldier's tent. Divine service, after the Protestant form, was regularly performed, morning and evening, in every regiment of Marlborough's army; they prepared for battle by taking the sacrament; they terminated their victories by thanksgiving. The armies of Louis, in a gay and gallant spirit, set out for the conflict. If any ecclesiastic appeared to bless their arms, it was the gorgeous priests of the ancient faith; they struck rather for the honour of their country, or the glory of their sovereign, than the unity in Church and State on which he was so strongly bent; and went

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to battle dreaming more of the splendour of Versailles or the smiles of beauty, than the dogmas of religion or the crusade of the Church of Rome.

3. Magnitude of the danger which threatened Europe, if France had proved successful.

As the principles and passions which animated the contending parties were thus opposite, proportionately great was the peril alike to the cause of religious freedom and European independence, if the coalition had not proved successful. That no danger was to be apprehended from its triumph has been decisively proved by the event; the Allies were victorious, and both have been preserved. But very different would have been the results, if a power, animated by the ambition, guided by the fanaticism, and directed by the ability of that of Louis XIV., had gained the ascendency in Europe. Beyond all question, a universal despotic dominion would have been established over the bodies, a cruel spiritual thraldom over the minds of men. France and Spain united under Bourbon princes, and in a close family alliance—the empire of Charlemagne with that of Charles V.—the power which revoked the edict of Nantes, and perpetrated the massacre of St Bartholomew, with that which banished the Moriscoes, and established the Inquisition, would have proved irresistible, and beyond example destructive to the best interests of mankind.

4. Results which might have followed the triumph of France.

The Protestants might have been driven, like the Pagan heathens of old by the son of Pepin, beyond the Elbe; the Stuart race, and with them Romish ascendency, might have been re-established in England; the fire lighted by Latimer and Ridley might have been extinguished in blood; and the energy breathed by

religious freedom into the Anglo-Saxon race might have expired. The destinies of the world would have been changed. Europe, instead of a variety of independent states, whose mutual hostility kept alive courage, while their national rivalry stimulated talent, would have sunk into the slumber attendant on universal dominion. The colonial empire of England would have withered away and perished, as that of Spain has done in the grasp of the Inquisition. The Anglo-Saxon race would have been arrested in its mission to overspread the earth and subdue it. The centralised despotism of the Roman empire would have been renewed on Continental Europe; the chains of Romish tyranny, and with them the general infidelity of France before the Revolution, would have extinguished or perverted thought in the British Islands. There, too, the event has proved the justice of these anticipations. France, during the eighteenth century, has taught us in what state our minds would have been had Marlborough been overthrown; the infidelity of Voltaire, to what a state of anarchy our religious opinions would have been reduced; the despotism of Napoleon at its close, to what tyranny our persons would have been subjected.

5. Opposite sides on political questions on which the parties were ranged, similar to what afterwards occurred.

The opposite principles which animated the contending parties, were very similar to those which a century after ranged Europe against France, in the wars of the French Revolution; the great conflict of the eighteenth century was but an extension, to the political and social relations of men, of the religious divisions which distracted the seventeenth. But in one respect, the

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antagonists were on opposite sides. In so far as they were banded together against the ambition of France, the coalition of 1689 was guided by the same principles as that of 1793; the armies of Eugene struck for the same cause as those of the Archduke Charles. But in so far as they contended for a moral principle, their relative position was in a great measure reversed:—England, in the wars of William and Anne, was on the side of civil and religious freedom; she stood foremost in the contest for liberty of thought and the free choice of worship; she was herself the first and greatest of revolutionary powers. France supported the despotism of the Romish faith, and that system of unity in civil government which aimed at extending chains as strong over the temporal concerns of men. The industry of towns, the wealth of commerce, arrayed a numerous but motley array of many nations around the banner of St George; the strength of feudal attachment, the loyalty of chivalrous devotion, brought the strength of a gallant people round the oriflamme of St Denis.

6. Yet fundamentally the Allies and France were in both cases ranged on the same sides.

Yet, though apparently on opposite, the forces of the Coalition and of France were in reality ranged on the same sides in the war of the Succession as in that of the French Revolution. In both, religion and freedom were the principles on which the Allies rested, and unity of government and military glory were the moving springs of effort in France. The iron rule of the Convention, the despotism of Napoleon, were essentially identical, though wielded by different hands and in a different name, with the government of Louis XIV. National

independence, religious duty, breathed in the proclamations of Alexander, not less than the daily services amidst the tents of Marlborough. It matters not by whom despots are elected, provided they are despots and support power. The absolute nature of a contest is not to be judged of merely by the war cries which the parties raise, or the banners under which their forces are nominally enrolled. The true test is to be found in the practical tendency and social results of the institutions for which its partisans contend. The cause of real freedom is often advanced by the victories gained by a monarch's armies; the march of practical despotism is never so accelerated as by the triumph of republican bayonets. William III. was the head of a revolutionary dynasty, but he established the government of Great Britain on a far more aristocratic basis during the succeeding century than it had ever before attained. Louis XIV., was the leader of a crusade of the faithful against the Protestant party, but he bequeathed a century of irreligion to France, which ended in the overthrow of its government. The Committee of Public Salvation, wielding the forces of the Revolution, established a centralised military despotism in France, far exceeding any thing dreamt of by Richelieu or Louvois, and which has never since been shaken off in that country. The spread of political power, the popularisation of social institutions, have never been so rapid in Great Britain as during the thirty years which immediately succeeded the glorious termination of the anti-revolutionary war.

But from this ranging of the contending parties, in

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7. Important difference in the parties by whom the war was opposed in the time of Marlborough and Napoleon.

name at least, on opposite sides, and the important fact of the legitimate dynasty having been displaced by a revolutionary monarch on the throne of England, there arose a most important difference between the respective parties who opposed the war, commencing in 1679, and that which began in 1793. The war which terminated with the treaty of Ryswick was waged by William, himself the Louis Philippe of the younger branch of the Stuart dynasty; that of the Succession was headed by Anne, his successor on the revolutionary throne. It was carried on for the freedom of conscience and liberty of worship, and supported by the whole strength of the Whig aristocracy, and the whole vehemence of the Protestant fervour. Hence, the enemies of the war, the Opposition to the Government, naturally espoused the other side. The Tory and High Church party gradually became estranged from the government, and at length openly came into hostility with it, in consequence of the continued increase which the prosecution of the war gave to the influence of its opponents, and the dreadful and interminable dangers with which it seemed to threaten the finances of the country. Then the positions of parties became precisely the reverse of what they subsequently were during the war with revolutionary France; and yet both at heart were actuated by the same motives. The Tories opposed the war of the Succession and decried Marlborough's victories as warmly as the Whigs resisted the contest with France, and strove to lessen Wellington's fame, a century later. Both put forth public principle and

the interest of the nation as the ostensible grounds of their conduct; but both in secret were actuated, perhaps unconsciously, by different and more pressing motives. The Tories opposed the war with Louis XIV. because it tended to confirm their opponents in power, and postpone, if not destroy, their hopes of restoring the exiled family. The Whigs opposed the war with Napoleon, because it was waged against a power which at least began with the principles of democracy, and because they expected its successful issue would, for perhaps more than a generation, confirm the Tories in possession of the reins of government.

8. State of the opposite parties in Great Britain since the Great Rebellion.

Political parties, and the alliances of cabinets in Europe, had been long actuated and regulated by these principles, which had in an especial manner become predominant since the terrible conflict of the Great Rebellion in England. All the foreign alliances of Charles II. had in secret been suggested by jealousy of the republican party, from which his family had sustained such grievous injuries at home. French mistresses, the charms of the Duchess of Portsmouth, were not disregarded by the amorous monarch; but the chief motive of his conduct was a desire to extinguish the Puritan faction and the Protestant faith in his dominions. It was an article of the secret treaty between Charles and Louis XIV. that the republican forms of government as existing in Holland, should be superseded by a hereditary monarchy in the person of the Stadtholder and his family; and that the English monarch should as soon as prudent do what was possible for the

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re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Great Britain.* These social and political divisions, naturally arising from the vehement contests of the seventeenth century, derived additional strength from the expulsion of the ancient dynasty, and the successful result of the Revolution of 1688 in this country. Personal animosity and party ambition, were immediately added to the flames of political hostility. It was felt by all that the change of dynasty had been brought about by many disgraceful acts of treachery in the leaders of the movement, as well as by the generous indignation of a nation at attempts to enslave them. The bitterness of lost influence, the recollection of shattered power, were added to the broad lines of political distinction; and a cast-down party, which had generous feelings and profound attachments to rest upon, ere long gathered strength from the very circumstances, in the external condition of the nation, which to appearance had established the power of their opponents on an immoveable foundation.

9. The union of parties had brought about the Revolution.

The Revolution had been brought about by a coalition of parties, arising from the general feeling of unbearable oppression experienced by the nation. The Tories had joined in it as cordially as the Whigs; the High Church party as much as the Dissenters. It began with sending the seven bishops to the Tower; it was ended by the cheers of the troops at their acquittal on Hounslow Heath. Bolingbroke has well expressed the views which induced the Tory party and ancient

* CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.* ii. 167.

cavaliers of the realm to take part in this great movement, and there is no reason to believe that he was insincere in what he said. "Many," says he, "of the most distinguished Tories, some of those who carried highest the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, were engaged in it, and the whole nation was ripe for it. The Whigs were zealous in the same cause, but their zeal was not such as I think it had been some years before, a zeal without knowledge. I mean it was better tempered and more prudently conducted. Though the king was not the better for his experience, parties were. Both saw their errors. The Tories stopped short in pursuit of a bad principle; the Whigs reformed the abuse of a good one. Both had sacrificed their country to their party; both on this occasion sacrificed their party to their country. The cause of liberty was no longer made the cause of a party, by being set on such a bottom as one party alone approved. The Revolution was plainly designed to restore and secure our government, ecclesiastical and civil, on true foundations; and whatever might happen to the king, there was no room to apprehend any change in the constitution. The republican whimsies, indeed, that reigned in the days of usurpation and confusion, still prevailed among some of that party. But this leaven was so near worn out, that it could neither corrupt, nor seem any longer to corrupt, the mass of the Whig party. That party never had been Republicans or Presbyterians, any more than they had been Quakers; any more than the Tory party had been Papists when, notwithstanding their aversion

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to Popery, they were undeniably under the accidental influence of Popish councils. But even the appearances were now rectified. The Revolution was a fire which purged off the dross of both parties; and the dross being purged off, they appeared to be the same metal, and answered the same standard."*

10. Dangers which flowed from the Revolution.

But it is a dangerous thing for the people, even for the best founded causes of dissatisfaction, to overturn an established government. Such a step generally remedies the immediate evils which produced the discontent, but it does so only by introducing a host of others, often still more injurious, and which become by the triumph of the first convulsion wholly irremoveable. No nation ever had juster cause for dispossessing a sovereign than England had in 1688.; for James was striving at once and by force to subvert the civil liberties, and change the established religion, of his people. Yet from this just and necessary change, as *all* parties then felt it to be, were soon found to flow a series of causes and effects which induced a host of evils so serious and appalling, that the contemporary age was seized with consternation at their magnitude, and the effects of which will be felt to the latest generation in Great Britain.

11. The funding system is introduced by William III.

The first effect which immediately followed was the commencement of the great war with France, which, beginning in 1689, continued with a cessation only of five years, till 1713. England was now the head of the Protestant and independent league; and upon her

* *A Dissertation on Parties.* BOLINGBROKE'S *Works*, iii. 125.

fell the weight of the contest with Romish and despotic France. The finances of Great Britain, as they were managed in former times, could never have sustained the cost of such a war for a tenth part of the time. But expense now seemed to be no obstacle to the government. A new engine of surpassing strength had been discovered for extracting capital out of a country; and the able statesmen who had it in their hands, felt it to be not less serviceable in consolidating the internal power than in meeting the external expenses of the new dynasty. The revenue at the dethronement of James II. was only £2,000,000 a-year, a sum not equal to three months' expenditure of the war; and long experience had proved the extreme difficulty of getting the people, even under the most pressing emergencies of government, to make any addition to the public burdens. But William brought with him from Holland the secret of the *Funding System*. He showed the nation what may be done by forestalling the resources of future years in the present, by pledging the industry of a people to its capital. It was this marvellous discovery, then new to the world, which at once occasioned the successes which signalised the external government of the Revolution, and engendered the internal discontent which all but produced its downfal.

12. General terrors it excited in Great Britain.

When this system first began, the nation was not sensible of the important consequences to which it could lead. They thought that it could only be a temporary expedient; and that though perhaps it might lead to a few millions being unnecessarily added to the

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national debt, yet that would be all. Though from the first, accordingly, its progress was viewed with a jealous eye by the thinking few, it made but little impression upon the unthinking many before the peace of Ryswick. But when the war of the Succession began in 1702, and continued without intermission, and attended by daily increasing expenditure for ten years, the apprehensions of a large part of the nation became excessive. At the Revolution, the national debt, as already mentioned, was £661,000; by the year 1710 it exceeded £50,000,000 sterling. Though this sum may seem inconsiderable to us who have become accustomed to the much greater debts which have since been contracted, yet it appeared prodigious to a people then beginning to learn for the first time to what burden the finances of a nation may, by the funding system, be subjected. It was a terrible thing to think that in twenty years the public debt had been augmented *eighty-fold*,—that in that short time it had come to amount to *twenty-five* times the revenue of the nation at its commencement. And it had in reality become a formidable burden, as compared with the resources of the state even at that time; for the public income, which had been two millions at the dethronement of James, had only risen to £5,691,000 at the death of Anne, while the debt was £54,000,000; being nearly ten times its amount, and about half in proportion to the national revenue of what it is at this time.

Bolingbroke has left us the following vivid picture of the apprehensions with which, in the latter years of the

war of the Succession, the minds of men were filled on this dismal subject. "It is impossible to look back without grief on the necessary and unavoidable consequences of this establishment, or without indignation on that mystery of iniquity which hath been raised upon it, and carried on by means of it. Who can answer that a scheme which oppresses the farmer, ruins the manufacturer, breaks the merchant, discourages industry, and reduces fraud to a system; which drains continually a portion of our national wealth away to foreigners, and draws most perniciously the rest of that immense property that was diffused among thousands into the pockets of a few—who can answer that such a scheme will always endure? The whole art of stock-jobbing, the whole mystery of iniquity mentioned above, arises from this establishment, and is employed about the funds; and the main-springs which turn or may turn the artificial wheel of credit, and make the paper estates that are fastened to it rise or fall, lurk behind the veil of the treasury. That luxury which began to spread after the restoration of Charles II. hath increased ever since from the growth of wealth among the stock-jobbers from this system. Nothing can be more certain than this, that national luxury and national poverty may in time establish national prostitution. The immense wealth of particular men is a circumstance which always attends national poverty, and is in a great measure the cause of it. We may already apply to our country what Sallust makes Cato say of the state of Rome, and I wish we could apply no more:—'Pro

13. Bolingbroke's account of its dangers.

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his nos habemus luxuriam; publicè egestatem, privatim opulentiam.' 'Public want and private wealth abound in all declining states.'"*

14. General corruption which was induced in the country.

What rendered this system peculiarly alarming, was the simultaneous development of a new and apparently interminable system of government by which it was to be carried on. The Stuarts had tried to reign by prerogative; and as one monarch had lost his head and another his crown in the attempt, the friends of freedom flattered themselves that the liberties of the nation were now established on a foundation which no future sovereign would attempt to shake. But the accession of William soon showed that there are other ways of managing a people than by open force. The Stuarts had failed because they had been bred under monarchical habits, and had no other ideas of government than those of prerogative and power. Experience had not taught them the secret, so well known to the Roman Emperor, of veiling authority under the *name* of freedom, and disarming opposition by attending to the *interests* of its leaders. William brought from the commercial republic of Holland, where they had been long practised and were perfectly understood, a thorough knowledge of both these important state secrets. Introduced by Parliament, having no legitimate title to the throne, standing solely on the choice of the nation, he was careful in all his measures not to run counter either in form or substance to the power which had raised him to the throne. Every thing originated with the Legis-

* Bolingbroke's *Dissertation on Parties*. *Works*, iii. 298, 299.

lature. The House of Commons stood forth in appearance as the ruler of the state. But then he contrived, by a simple expedient, to rule the House of Commons. The wars in which he was of necessity engaged; the loans which they rendered unavoidable, and which the commercial wealth of the nation enabled it to advance; and the great increase in the general expenditure of the exchequer,—all conspired to place a vast and unprecedented amount of patronage in the hands of government. This was systematically directed to buy off opposition in Parliament, and secure a majority in the constituencies. Corruption in every possible form, from the highest to the lowest, was employed in all parts of Great Britain, especially among the urban electors; and with such success, that almost every measure of government passed without difficulty through both Houses of Parliament. The nation had shaken off the prerogatives of the Crown, but they had fallen under the domination of its influence. The gold of the Exchequer was found to be more powerful than the penalties of the Star Chamber; and the last state of the realm was worse than the first.

15. Bolingbroke's account of the general indignation at this demoralizing system.

If this enormous increase in the public debt, under the influence of the funding system, awakened the apprehensions of the thoughtful, not less did the unbounded spread of corruption excite the indignation of the virtuous part of the nation. The first might embarrass the revenue and cripple the resources of the nation; but this threatened to sap the foundations of its prosperity by undermining its virtue. Bolingbroke, whose

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genius, however brilliant, seldom did more than reflect the ideas of that part of the empire which constituted his section of the community, has left the following account of the sentiments with which this new and demoralising system of influence was regarded by the sturdy English or country party. "As the means of influencing by prerogative and of governing by force were considered to be increased formerly upon every addition to the power of the Crown, so are the means of influencing by money, and of governing by corruption, to be considered as increased now, upon that increase of power which hath accrued to the Crown by the new constitution of the revenue since the Revolution.' Not only the means of corrupting are increased on the part of the Crown, but the facility of employing these means with success is increased, on the part of the people, on the part of the electors, and the part of the elected. The power of the Crown to corrupt, and the proneness of the people to be corrupted, must continue to increase on the same principles, until a stop be put to the growing wealth and power of the one, and the growing depravity of the other. The Ministers, though never so weak, are always impudent enough to act, and able enough to get frequent supplies on national pretences for private purposes. The consequences of this are manifold; for the more money passes through their hands, the more opportunities they have of gain; and in particular they may share it if they please in every bad bargain they make for the public; and the worse their bargain, the better their share will be. Then an immense

subsidy given to some little Prince who deals in soldiers, or an immense arrear stated *in favour of these little merchants of human flesh*, may be so ordered as to steal enough from the public to replenish the royal coffers, glut the Ministers, feed some of their hungry creatures, and bribe a Parliament besides. The establishment of public funds on the credit of these taxes hath been productive of far greater mischiefs than the taxes themselves, not only by increasing the means of corruption and the power of corruption, but the effect it hath had on the spirit of the nation, its manners and morals. Britain will soon be in the state described by Philip II. of his own court:—'They all take money, except myself and Sapona.' Britain may ere long be in that very condition in which, and in which alone, her constitution and her liberty in consequence may be destroyed, because the people may, in a state of universal corruption, and will in no other, either suffer others to betray them or betray themselves. How near a progress we had made to this, I determine not. This I say, that it is time for every man who is desirous to preserve the British constitution, to contribute all he can to prevent the ill effects of that new influence and power which has gained strength in every reign since the Revolution; of those means of corruption that may be employed one time or other on the part of the Crown; and of that proneness to corruption on the part of the people that hath been long growing, and still grows."*

Independent of these considerations, which were so

* BOLINGBROKE'S *Dissertation on Parties*. *Works*, iii. 302.

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16. Strong principles of freedom and loyalty in the English character.

obvious that they forced themselves on the consideration of every thinking person in the country, there were a powerful set of feelings, which ere long began to impel the public mind in the same direction. Notwithstanding the strong love of freedom which has in every age characterised the English people, and which has been evinced for nearly a thousand years by the constant struggles they have made to maintain and extend their liberties, there is no nation in whom the principle of loyalty has taken a stronger root, or in which the precept to "fear God and honour the King" is more thoroughly interwoven with their domestic affections. It is the contest of these opposite principles which has produced such constant struggles in every period of English history; for not only has the strife repeatedly been fierce between them while it lasted, but the temporary triumph of the one has invariably and speedily been followed by a decided reaction in favour of the other. Vehement and energetic in whatever it undertakes, the Anglo-Saxon race rush alternately into the extreme of republican licentiousness and the enthusiasm of chivalrous loyalty. It was thus that the general and unaccountable submission to their Norman rulers was succeeded by the rebellion of Jack Cade; the fervour of the Reformation by the slavish crouching to Henry VIII., and devoted loyalty to Elizabeth; the bloodshed of the Great Rebellion by the transports of the Restoration; and that, after running well-nigh mad, on occasion of the Popish plot in the reign of Charles II., the people flew into excesses as great

against the other party on occasion of the Ryehouse conspiracy.

17. Reaction of generous feelings in favour of the Tories in the advanced period of the war.

A similar reaction took place after James II. was expelled and William III. seated on the throne. The imminent danger which the civil and religious liberties of the country had run of being subverted by the arbitrary measures of that sincere and conscientious, but headstrong and senseless prince, had produced a general combination of parties, which rendered the monarch powerless, and occasioned his bloodless fall from the throne. But after the deed was accomplished, and the king dethroned, the nation began to reflect on what it had done. Divisions, as usual, were consequent on success. A reaction, similar in kind, though inferior in degree, to what took place when the head of Charles I. fell on the scaffold, took place over the whole country. Surrounded by his guards, directed by his priests, preceded by his lawyers, aided by Jefferies, James had been regarded with deserved hatred and dread. Exiled from his country, cast down from his throne, eating the bread of the stranger, he became the object of pity. The loyal and generous feelings revived with additional force on the cessation of the dangers which had for a time restrained their manifestation. These feelings became peculiarly strong in the rural or country party, which beheld, with undisguised indignation, their fortunes eclipsed and their influence destroyed by the sycophants and capitalists who crowded the royal antechamber, and participated in the gains of the treasury. It was soon found that the Revolution had removed one set of

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dangers only to introduce another. Protestantism was secure, but public morality was sinking; the Star Chamber was no longer to be feared, but corruption had become general; nothing was heard of the prerogative, but Parliament had become so obsequious that its submission seemed almost a matter of course, even to a despotic prince. When to this natural reaction against a great and violent change in the government, was added the spontaneous return of a loyal people to that attachment to their sovereign from which they could not be long estranged, and the enormous and seemingly interminable expenses of a protracted and burdensome contest, it is not surprising that the war became daily more unpopular, and Marlborough, who was with justice regarded as its head, the object of general obloquy.

18. Which distinctly appeared in the votes and composition of the House of Commons.

Voltaire, who never lost an opportunity of representing human affairs as governed entirely by caprice or accident, would make his readers believe that the whole change was the result of a bedchamber intrigue at the court of Queen Anne, and that a fit of passion in Mrs Masham arrested the course of Marlborough's victories, and preserved the tottering throne of Louis XIV. But the considerations which have now been stated, demonstrate that this was very far from being the case; that general causes co-operated with special ones in producing the grand result; and that the palace intrigue was not so much the cause as the effect of that general change in the public mind, which had come over the nation in the later years of the war, and which all the lustre of Marlborough's victories had not been able to arrest. And

this appeared in the most decisive manner in the votes of the House during the progress of the contest. When the war began it was supported by a large majority in both houses; but as the contest rolled on, and its expenses increased, the majority in the lower House gradually dropped off; when Harley and St John were introduced into the ministry, it assumed that transition character which is seldom of long duration, but which always accompanies a coalition; and when at length the Whigs, with the exception of Marlborough, were entirely turned out, and he was left alone to conduct the war, amidst his political enemies, the Government was supported by a large majority in the House of Commons. All the violent and ungenerous proceedings against that great General, his dismissal from office, the innumerable vexations to which he was exposed, and the accusations of peculation which were brought against him, were carried by large majorities in the House of Commons; the House of Peers, after it had been swamped by the creation of twelve, ceased to struggle any longer with the declared voice of the public; and whatever posterity may have thought of it, nothing is more certain than that the peace of Utrecht itself was, despite the cutting strictures of a few indignant patriots, cordially approved of at the time by a great majority in the nation.

19. Character of Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke, whose great abilities, both as a statesman, an orator, and a writer, rendered him the real head of the party in England that ultimately effected the great change in its foreign policy which altered the whole face of Europe, was one of the most remarkable

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men, even among the brilliant wits of Queen Anne's reign. It could not be said of him, as he said of Marlborough, that he was the perfection of genius aided only by experience. On the contrary, he shared largely in the advantages of a refined education, and his native abilities acquired additional lustre from the brilliant foreign setting in which they never failed to appear. An accomplished classical scholar, profoundly versed in the philosophy, history, and poetry of Greece and Rome, he not only made use of the treasures of ancient genius to enrich his thoughts, but brought forward their expressions with the happiest effect, to aid and adorn his eloquence. Nature had been prodigal to him of those gifts, without which the most brilliant genius can seldom produce any lasting effect on popular assemblies. His countenance was in the highest degree expressive, his elocution rapid and easy, his memory ready and tenacious, his imagination vivid and impassioned. Such was the power of extempore composition which he possessed, that on the testimony, even of the most inveterate of his political opponents, you might have printed what fell from him, during the warmth of convivial conversation, without any inelegance or inaccuracy being perceptible. These brilliant qualities shone forth with peculiar lustre in the ease and *abandon* of social intercourse with the illustrious literary men who adorned the reign of Queen Anne, and the early part of that of George I. Pope, it is well known, almost idolised him; and the thoughts in the "Essay on Man" are said to have been in great part suggested by his conversation.

"Awake, my St John, leave all meaner things
To low ambition and the pride of kings;
Let us, since life can little more supply,
Than just to look about us and to die,
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man,
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man."

20. His inconsistencies and faults.

Had Bolingbroke's steadiness of principle, and consistency of conduct, been equal to these shining abilities, he would have been one of the most eminent men that England ever produced. But this, unfortunately, was very far from being the case. In him, more truly than any other man, might be seen the truth of the words of Scripture, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Inconsistency, and want of rectitude, were the bane at once of his political conduct and literary compositions. He was so changeable in his partialities, so variable in his declamations, that there is hardly an eminent man, and certainly not a political party of his time, that he has not alternately praised to the skies, and loaded with vituperation. It is scarcely possible to say what his principles were, for at different periods of his life he espoused those of all men. His only steady aversion seemed to have been to Christianity; and Voltaire acquired almost all the arguments which he afterwards wielded with so much effect against religion from his conversation and knowledge. Yet he was not an atheist. Pope's "Essay on Man," and many other passages in his own writings, demonstrate that he had exalted but vague and dreamy ideas of natural religion. Horace Walpole said of him, "With the most agreeable talents

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in the world, and with great parts, he was neither happy nor successful. He wrote against the king who had forgiven him, against Sir Robert Walpole who did forgive him, against the pretender and the clergy who never will forgive him. He is one of our best writers; though his attacks on all governments and all religions (neither of which views he cared directly to own), have necessarily involved his style in a want of perspicuity. One must know the man before we can often guess his meaning."* This inconsistency tainted his private and moral, as well as public and political character. He was ambitious, and unscrupulous as to the means of elevation; vehement in hatred; variable in principle. Capable of profound dissimulation, he occasionally exercised it, and effectually deceived the most penetrating of his opponents. But in general, the liveliness of his imagination, and quickness of his temper, caused him to give vent to the desire or feeling of the moment with an ardour which admitted neither of concealment nor moderation. And hence the otherwise inexplicable inconsistencies and contradictions both of his public life and private thoughts.

21. Character of Harley, Earl of Oxford.

Harley, afterwards created Earl of Oxford, brought to the support of the same party talents of a much inferior, but still very serviceable kind. He had not the brilliancy of St John's imagination, his vast stores of erudition, or his power of ready and extempore eloquence. But he was more prudent and sagacious, had more worldly wisdom, and incomparably more of a

* *Royal and Noble Authors*, 74.

statesman's tact than his brilliant coadjutor. His wisdom and discretion, like that of Sir Robert Peel in the reconstruction of the same party after its discomfiture by the Revolution of 1832, brought the Tories up from a small minority in the commencement of the War of the Succession, to a decided majority before its close, in the Commons, Lords, and Queen's Council. He was no common man, who, in the face of a large Whig majority at the commencement of the struggle, and despite the lustre of Marlborough's victories, could so take advantage of the mutations of fortune, the changes of public opinion, and the still more variable gales of court favour, as under such circumstances to accomplish such a success.

22. Swift and the Tory writers in the press.

It was not, however, either in Parliament or the Cabinet that the main strength of the party which overthrew Marlborough, and brought about the peace of Utrecht, was founded. It was the vast ability and sarcastic powers of their allies in the press which chiefly produced the result. The Tories were supported by a band of writers who, in the war of pamphlets, by which the contests of parties out of Parliament at that period were carried on, never have been exceeded as regards the versatility of their powers, and thorough knowledge they possessed of the means of rousing and inflaming the general mind. SWIFT was the most powerful of that determined band; and never did intellectual gladiator bring to the deadly strife of envenomed rapiers, qualities more admirably adapted for success. Able, penetrating, and sagacious, possessed of great powers of argument;

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greater still of sarcasm; thoroughly acquainted with human nature, and unfettered by any of the delicacies which, in men of more refined minds, often prevent the stirring of its passions, — he knew how to excite the public mind by awakening their jealousy in regard to matters which came home to every understanding. Disregarding all remote considerations adapted only for the thoughtful, drawn from the balance of power, matters of foreign policy, or the ultimate danger of England, he at once fastened on Marlborough the damning charge of pecuniary cupidity; held forth the continuance of the war as entirely owing to his sordid thirst of gain; and all the wealth which flowed into the coffers of the great commander as wrung from the labours of hard-wrought Englishmen. Concealing and perverting what he knew was the truth of ancient history, he represented the Roman consul as rewarded for his victories by a triumph, which cost less than a thousand pounds, and Marlborough enjoying five hundred thousand as the fruit of his laurels. He forgot to add, that such were the means of amassing a fortune which victory gave to the Roman proconsuls, that Cæsar, before obtaining the province of Gaul, was enabled on its prospect to contract £2,500,000 of debt. It may be conceived what effect such misrepresentations had upon a people already groaning under new taxes, terrified at the growth of the national debt, and inflamed with that envy which the rapid rise, even of the most exalted merit, scarce ever fails to produce in the great majority of men. The Whigs had able writers,

too, on their side, but they were no match for their adversaries in the power of producing a present effect on the multitude, whatever they might be on the cultivated in future ages; and the elegant papers of Addison and Steele, in the *Spectator* and *Freeholder*, were but a poor set-off to the coarse invectives and withering sarcasms of Swift.

23. It was these general causes which overturned Marlborough.

Bolingbroke and Harley were Tory and monarchical in their ideas: they belonged to the high church party in religion; and in secret, they dreamt of the restoration of the exiled dynasty. Being actuated by such principles, it is not surprising that they viewed with jealousy, and at last with open and undisguised aversion, the course of Marlborough's victories, and lent all the weight of their talents and influence to aid in the propagation of the libels calculated to destroy him. Those triumphs, however glorious to England, however vital to its existence as an independent state, were all adverse to their political principles. They threatened to extinguish the monarchical and Roman Catholic principles in the person of Louis XIV., and erect in supremacy, in their stead, the morose doctrines of the Covenanters, the solemn league and covenant, the principles of the Dutch republicans. Queen Anne, with the usual instinct of crowned heads, when in secure possession of power, inclined to the same opinions. She felt the same repugnance to the Whigs, who had placed her after William on the throne, that Louis Philippe, in after times, did to Lafayette and the patriots of 1830, who had erected the throne of the Barricades. The

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warmest partisans of royalty in Great Britain and Ireland were to be found in the French ranks; they embraced many of the most generous and exalted, because disinterested, persons in the British dominions. Their appearance excited profound sympathy and admiration wherever they appeared on the Continent.* The Pretender himself combated at Malplaquet against Marlborough in the midst of the chivalry of France. It would be erroneous, therefore, to consider the intrigues and animosity which at length effected the downfal of Marlborough and brought about the peace of Utrecht, as entirely the result of a revolution *du Palais*, — a bedchamber affair, in which the interests and glory of nations were sacrificed to the spite or the jealousies of women: and still more unjust would it be to stigmatise Bolingbroke and Harley as worthless adventurers, who

* "Leurs aventures furent dignes des beaux jours de Sparte et d'Athènes. Ils étaient tous d'une naissance honorable; attachés à leurs chefs, et affectionnés les uns aux autres; irréprochables en tout. Ils se formaient en une compagnie de soldats au service de France. Ils furent passés en révue par le Roi à St Germain en Laye: le Roi salua les troupes par une inclination de la tête et le chapeau bas. Il révint, salua de nouveau, et fondit en larmes. Ils se mirent à genoux, baissants la tête contre la terre, puis se rélevants tout à la fois, ils lui firent le salut militaire. Ils furent envoyés delà à les frontières d'Espagne, ce que formait un marché de 900 milles. Partout où ils passaient ils tiraient des larmes des yeux des femmes, obtenaient le respect de quelques hommes, et en faisant rire d'autres par la moquerie qui s'attache au malheur. Ils étaient toujours les premiers dans une bataille, et les derniers dans une retraite. Ils manquerent souvent des choses les plus necessaires à la vie, cependant on ne les entendit jamais se plaindre, excepté des souffrances de celui qu'ils regardaient comme leur souverain."—CHATEAUBRIAND, *Mémoires sur le Duc de Berry*, *Œuvres*, ii. 68.

were actuated in their opposition to the great hero of the age by mere personal envy or political hostility. Mrs Masham's bedchamber intrigue, and Bolingbroke's cabinet measures, were merely the form which a great principle, at all times strong in English society, and then peculiarly active, took in order to avert a danger with which, in their estimation, English institutions were threatened. And that principle is expressed in the words, "Fear God and honour the King."

24. Great violations of moral rectitude in the mode of their attack on Marlborough.

It is evident, from what has been said, that the Tory party had much argument on their side in this great controversy; and that though we, instructed by the event, may now see very clearly that they erred on the occasion, yet there is much to be said on their behalf; and the strongest judgment, as well as the purest patriotism, might at the time have found it difficult to say to which side the scales of reason preponderated. But there is one point for which no apology can be made, and for which all the heat of party and all the reality of impending danger can afford no excuse. This was the *manner* in which they prosecuted their hostility against Marlborough and the war. They did not dispossess the one, and terminate the other, as they might have done, by a simple vote of the House of Commons. They did not venture for long on any open attack on either. They were afraid to measure their strength in open combat with the conqueror of Blenheim. They preferred the covert attacks of envy, malice, and uncharitableness. Their weapons, with the people, were malignant libels; at court, underhand bedchamber

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intrigues. They did not deprive the hero of his command, but they strove to thwart his measures so that they might prove unsuccessful. Openly they declared that any minister deserved to lose his head who should propose to abandon Spain and the Indies to a Bourbon Prince; in secret they were negotiating with Louis at that very moment a treaty of peace, the basis of which was that very relinquishment. Ostensibly they still paid to Marlborough the external marks of respect, but they ceased to admit him to their confidential councils; they denied him the thanks of Parliament for his services; they encouraged the circulation of the most malignant falsehoods regarding his character; they did their utmost to load him with indignities and mortifications at court. Their object seems to have been to induce him, through disgust at their ingratitude, to resign; and thus to have spared them the discredit of removing the greatest general of England from a command which he had held with so much glory. And when the temper or patriotism of Marlborough was proof against their attack, they descended to the infamy of charging him with peculation, on grounds so false that they did not venture to bring them to judicial investigation, even in the House of Peers, which they had swamped for his overthrow. At last they drove the greatest general of England, and the most signal benefactor that ever had arisen to his country, into disgrace, in order to bring about a discreditable peace, which deprived the nation of the chief fruit of his victories.

And the result has now decisively proved that

25. What was the danger to be guarded against in the Peace.

Bolingbroke and the Tories were as wrong on this occasion in their general policy, as in the means for its accomplishment; and that the course which Godolphin and Marlborough contended for, and, but for the change of Ministry, undoubtedly would have carried into effect, was the one imperatively required by the honour and interests of England. Spain and France were the two powers by whom the independence of this country had been separately threatened for two centuries. The narrow escape made from invasion, and possibly dismemberment, on occasion of the Spanish Armada, in 1588, and the battle of La Hogue in 1692, sufficiently demonstrate this. The Union of *the two* under one head, therefore, could not but prove in the highest degree perilous to the independence of England. Both parties seemed to admit this: but they proposed different means to avert the danger. Marlborough and the Whigs maintained that it could be effectually done only by separating, in a permanent manner, the *reigning families* in France and Spain—and to effect this, they proposed to settle the crown of Spain on Charles VI., Archduke of Austria. Provided this was done, they had no objections that an appanage for the Duke of Anjou, the other competitor for the throne, should be carved out of the other possessions of the Spanish crown in Italy and Sicily. This was substantially the basis they assumed in the conferences of Gertruydenberg in 1709. Bolingbroke and the Tories, again, contended that it was necessary to separate the reigning families, provided only that the *two crowns* were prevented from

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uniting on one head: and to prevent this they introduced the stringent clauses into the treaty of Utrecht, already mentioned, providing that the Salic law, which *excludes females from the succession*, should be the law of the Spanish throne, and that in no event, and under no circumstances, should the crowns of Spain and France be united on the same head.

26. The result has proved the Tories were wrong in their policy regarding it.

These provisions appeared, at first sight, to guard, in part at least, against the danger which threatened; and this circumstance, coupled with the natural desire of men to terminate a long and burdensome war, rendered the peace of Utrecht generally acceptable to the nation. It was foreseen, however, at the time, and loudly declared by the Whigs, both in Parliament and the country, that this security was seeming only, and that leaving a grandson of Louis XIV. on the throne of Spain, with the name of an independent kingdom, was in reality more dangerous to the security of England than the junction of the two crowns on the same head would have been. The event has now decisively proved the justice of this view. Had the crown of Spain been openly placed on the same head as that of France, the alliance of the two powers could not have been of long continuance. Castilian pride would have revolted at the idea of being subjected to the government of Paris; the war of independence in 1808 has shown what results follow the open assertion over the Peninsula of French domination. But by leaving Spain a crown nominally independent, but closely united by blood and interest with the French monarchy, the object of Louis

XIV. was gained, and in a way more safe and certain than even the union of the crowns could have afforded. The *family compact* succeeded. A close and indissoluble alliance between France and Spain, which subsisted unbroken for above a century, was the result. Spanish pride was soothed by the appearance of an independent government at Madrid: French ambition was gratified by the substantial devotion of the whole resources of Spain to the purposes of France.

27. Disastrous effects and serious dangers to England which followed the leaving a Bourbon on the Spanish throne.

The effects were soon apparent. In every war which ensued between France and England for the next century,—that of 1739, that of 1756, the American war, that of 1793,—Spain and France ere long united in hostilities against this country. Astonishing exertions of vigour and bravery on the part of our countrymen alone prevented the alliance proving fatal to the independence of England. We were worsted by them in the very next contest which followed the treaty of Utrecht, that which was terminated by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. The extraordinary genius of Frederick of Prussia and of Lord Chatham, joined to corresponding incapacity in the government of Louis XV. gave us, indeed, a glorious career of triumphs during the Seven Years' War. But when another power was added to their league, it became evident that England was overmatched by France and Spain. England was brought by the forces of France, Spain, and America, to the brink of ruin in the American war. The want of any popular historian to recount the events of that calamitous period, has rendered the nation insensible to the dangers it then

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ran; when the American colonies were in open and fierce revolt, when Hyder Ali had driven the English into Madras, and preparations were making for crossing the surf and abandoning India for ever; and when our colonial empire in the East was saved solely by the firmness of one man, whom England rewarded for his conduct by an impeachment! At that dreadful moment, the French and Spanish armies and fleets besieged Gibraltar, which was saved only by an extraordinary effort of skill on the part of Lord Howe, and soon after the combined fleets rode triumphant in the Channel, and blockaded Plymouth with forty-seven sail of the line, where the English fleet had sought refuge with twenty-one sail only.

28. Examples of this in later times.

At the commencement of the revolutionary war, the French and Spanish navies greatly outnumbered those of this country,* and in every one of the actions which followed from that of St Vincent, where the English fleet was fifteen sail to twenty-seven, to that of Trafalgar, where it was twenty-seven to thirty-three, the combined fleets were superior in numerical amount to our own. It is not generally known, but it is historically certain, that England was brought nearer to destruction by the alliance of Louis XVI. and the Spanish

* Viz.:—

	Line fit for Service.	Frigates.
French, ...	82 ...	79
Spanish, ...	76 ...	68
	158	147
English, ...	115	85
Excess of French and Spanish,	43	62

James's *Naval History*, i. 49–51–53. Appx. 11, 6 and 7.

monarchy, in 1782, than she afterwards was by the arms and power of Napoleon. And whoever contemplates these events with calmness and impartiality, will have little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that, had not the naval resources of France been destroyed by the confiscations and disasters of the Revolution, and the strength of the Peninsula been bound to our side by the unprovoked attack of Napoleon on Spanish independence in 1808, it is more than doubtful whether, ere this, the maritime superiority and colonial empire of England would not have been destroyed, and with them our national independence for ever lost. Such and so real were the dangers which Marlborough strove to avert; such and so great the perils brought upon the state by the Tories in 1712, from suffering political passions and private interests to render them insensible to the calls of public duty.

29. These dangers have arisen solely from the Spanish alliance.

And it is worthy of especial observation, that this danger, from the close alliance of France and Spain, was *entirely owing* to the family compact, arising from the Bourbons having been permitted by the treaty of Utrecht to remain on the throne of Spain. Prior to that succession, France and Spain were not only never in alliance, but always on terms of the most *bitter and rancorous hostility.* "My father's bones would rise from their grave," was a common saying in Castile, "if he could foresee a war with France." All the greatest wars in which France, prior to the succession of 1703, had engaged with continental powers, had been with Spain. A French monarch had been made prisoner at

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Pavia, and conducted to Madrid: French chivalry avenged the insult at Rocroy and Lens; Henry IV. and the Prince of Parma had exerted their rival talents against each other; and even in the early part of the reign of Louis XIV. the Spaniards were the most formidable enemies with which that monarch had to contend on the continent. So late as 1688, the same disposition of the cabinets of Madrid and Paris continued; and it was the knowledge that Spain had in secret joined the league of Augsburg in that year against him, which determined Louis XIV. to exert all his influence to obtain the Spanish succession for his grandson.* With an *Austrian* prince seated on the throne at Madrid, this alliance of France and Spain was not only impossible, but it was certain that the resources of the Peninsula would be mainly directed in hostility to French interests. Mutual necessity, and jealousy of their formidable common enemy, would have made Spain and England as cordial allies during the whole of the 18th century, as Scotland and France were in the days of Scottish independence; as Turkey and France were during the long wars of the latter power with the Imperialists in Germany; or as Spain and England became on the occasion of the invasion of the Peninsula by Napoleon in 1808. It was *this* great benefit which Marlborough's victories had secured for his country; it is this alliance which his diplomacy, had it been unopposed at home, would have secured, instead of the subservient government which, for a whole century after, placed its fleets and armies at

* CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.* iii. 296.

the disposal of the French government, and brought this country to the verge of perdition in consequence.

30. It was a sense of this advantage which made Napoleon engage in the Peninsular War.

If any doubt could exist on this subject, and with regard to the imminent danger of a family alliance between France and Spain to this country, it would be removed by the following consideration. Though Spain in the first instance joined the coalition against the French republic, she soon fell off from it; and the treaty between the two countries in 1795 was immediately followed by the accession of the Court of Madrid to the league of our enemies. With Spain by his side, Napoleon was constantly victorious, but from the moment that, through his perfidious aggression, he converted the Peninsular power into an enemy, his fortunes declined, until, from the effects of the double strain on his resources, he was involved in ruin. Taught by this great example, we shall no longer wonder that Louis XIV. made it the chief boast of his reign: "Enfin il n'y a plus de Pyrenees;" and braved the hostility of combined Europe, and risked destruction from Marlborough's victories, in order to secure the succession for his grandson. It will no longer appear surprising, that Napoleon hazarded all upon preserving his hold of the Peninsula, and incurred destruction, rather than abandon its strongholds when he set out on his Russian expedition. It will cease to be a matter of wonder that Parisian diplomacy has been so incessantly directed since 1830 to secure this benefit for the King of the French; and that Louis Philippe regards the Montpensier alliance as the brightest event of his reign. United by family compact to Spain.

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France has been proved by experience to be so strong as to become formidable to the liberties of all Europe. Severed from Spain, she is deprived of her chief means of aggrandisement, and in an especial manner ceases to be dangerous to the independence of Great Britain.

31. Causes which render the alliance of Spain of such vital importance to France.

The circumstance which, in every age, and in the opinion of the most penetrating statesmen of Europe, has rendered the Spanish alliance of such vital importance to the French monarchy, is not merely the accession of power which it brings, considerable though that has often proved, to the court of the Tuileries. It is the securing it *in rear*, which is the great advantage. In alliance with Spain, France can send her whole military force to the Rhine; the weight of thirty-four millions of men is at once felt by Germany. In hostility to Spain, half the force of France must be reserved at home, or placed in observation on the Pyrenees to secure the southern provinces of the monarchy from insult. The doubtful chance of the War of the Succession, the disastrous termination of the Peninsular contest, has shown France but too clearly what a dangerous battle-field for foreign hostility the mountains of Spain and Portugal afford. If we would duly estimate the addition the Spanish alliance makes, even without any actual increase of soldiers or sailors, to the power of France, we have only to reflect on the vast increase which the strength of England received without any great addition to its material resources, from the mere union with Scotland, and consequent termination of those mischievous intrigues which, before that auspi-

cious event, constantly, on the breaking out of hostilities with France, occasioned a distracting warfare on the banks of the Tweed. Or perhaps a still apter illustration may be found in the present state of Great Britain and Ireland. Certainly no minister ever could add so much to the power of Great Britain, as that one who, without drawing any supplies from the Emerald Isle, should merely prevent the constant *distraction* of the resources of the empire from the alternately turbulent and miserable state of its inhabitants; and whatever cause the people of Great Britain might have to applaud, most certainly its enemies would have little reason to thank the statesman, who kindly provided a princess, the marriage of whom with an English prince might render real an alliance which all the efforts of six centuries had been unable to consummate.

32. Instance of the same political infatuation in our times.

If any surprise should exist as to the blindness of Bolingbroke and the Tories, when they arrested the course of Marlborough's victories and secured the Spanish alliance to the French monarchy, or any doubt as to political passion being the real cause which induced this insensibility to national interests, it would be removed by what has occurred in our own time. The heroic and persevering efforts of the nation during the revolutionary war, the victories of Nelson and Wellington, had again reduced France to its original limits; and though the Bourbon dynasty was still on the throne of Madrid, yet the exasperation and exhaustion of the Peninsula, consequent on the dreadful war it had sustained with France, had rendered it no longer formidable, at least

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for the present, as an ally of that power. But political passions in 1830, as in 1712, got possession of England, and with an infatuation which would be incredible, if the blindness ever produced by those passions was not considered, we surrendered the whole objects for which we had so long been contending, and which had, in part at least, been secured by the triumphs of Marlborough and Wellington. With one hand we favoured the partition of the kingdom of the Netherlands, which we ourselves had created to be a check on France, and had guaranteed by the treaty of Vienna in 1815 as a *united* power; aided with our fleets the army of Louis Philippe in restoring Antwerp, the great outwork of Napoleon against this country, to the sway of the tricolor flag; and converted the Flemish fortresses, the outwork of Europe against France, into the outwork of France against Europe. With the other we have crushed the efforts of the Spanish people to place a King of their choice on the throne; kept alive for years a frightful and desolating civil war in the Basque provinces; concluded the Quadruple Alliance, in order to change the Salic law, which we ourselves had stipulated for Spain, and solemnly guaranteed by the treaty of Utrecht; and violated our pledged national faith, in order to place a succession of Revolutionary Queens on the throne of the Peninsula.

33. Results which have followed from it in the last instance.

We have got our reward. The result has followed which the few thoughtful persons, whom the prevailing mania of the day had not carried away, clearly anticipated at the very first, from our revolutionary propa-

gandism. Our whole policy, for the ten years during which it was dictated by political passions—not regulated by regard to national interests—has turned to the advantage of our enemies. Louis Philippe has profited, as well he might, by the temporary eclipse of our reason. He has secured the Netherlands for France, with its magnificent fortresses, and noble harbour of Antwerp, by the marriage of a daughter; and to all appearance gained Spain, with its vast sea-coast and boundless capabilities, by the marriage of a son. He has united these powers to France by a more enduring bond than even family alliance—the lasting tie of common interest arising from a common origin. Through all the changes of fortune, revolutionary powers will hold by each other, because they feel that mutual support is essential to their defence against legitimate monarchies. He has condescended to accept the princess, whom our strange and perfidious policy had rendered the heiress-presumptive of the throne of Madrid, for a son of France. The dream of Louis XIV. is realised: there are no longer any Pyrenees. By erecting the revolutionary throne of Belgium, and dispossessing the male line in Spain, we have at one blow abandoned the whole security gained by the victories of Marlborough and Wellington. We have done that for France which neither the ambition of Louis XIV. nor the arms of Napoleon could effect. We have abandoned even the slight security against the union of the French and Spanish powers, which Bolingbroke stipulated by the treaty of Utrecht. There is no longer any real impediment to the union of the French

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and Spanish crowns. Backed by the Belgian and Spanish alliances, Louis Philippe may deride our impotent protests. And when next we go to war with France, we shall have to confront a power stretching from the Scheldt to Gibraltar; and to combat fleets which, in 1782, blockaded Plymouth with forty-seven sail of the line, and in 1793 outnumbered the English navy by forty-three line-of-battle ships!

34. Strange insensibility to national sins which often prevails.

It is stated by Capefigue, in his admirable History of Louis XIV.,* that we should err much if we imagined that the revocation of the edict of Nantes was regarded in the same light by its contemporaries with which it is viewed by ourselves. Notwithstanding its frightful cruelty, it was universally regarded by the dominant Catholic majority over all Europe as a masterpiece of political wisdom; a measure alike called for by its evident justice and its palpable expedience.† Even the massacre of St Bartholomew is never mentioned by the contemporary Catholic historians save with exultation; and Charles IX., who perpetrated it, is the object of universal eulogium.‡ It was the same in 1793. The expatriation of a hundred thousand emigrants, the confiscation of their estates, the murder of a tithe of their number on the scaffold, the destruction of a million of lives during the Revolution, excited neither indignation nor commiseration in the Jacobin majority in France.

* By far the best History of that eventful reign which has yet appeared in Europe.

† CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de Louis XIV.* iii. 172.

‡ CAPEFIGUE, *Hist. de la Réforme*, iii. 239, 240.

It was universally regarded by them as a measure equally expedient, justifiable, and necessary. The entire abandonment at once of our public faith and national policy, in like manner, during the fervour of political passions in this country, some years ago, in relation both to Spain and the Netherlands; the nourishing a frightful civil war for years together on the banks of the Ebro; the dispossessing a sovereign we were pledged as a nation to maintain on the throne of Spain, excited no general feeling, either of pity or indignation, in this country. It was thought to be quite natural and proper that we should supplant legitimate Kings by revolutionary Queens in every country around us. Examples of this sort are fitted to awaken at once feelings of charity and distrust in our breasts—charity to others, distrust of ourselves. They may teach us to view with a lenient, if not a forgiving eye, the aberrations of those nations which have yielded to the force of those passions under which, with so many more means of resistance, our own understandings have so violently reeled; and to examine anxiously whether many of the public measures which at the time are the subject of the most general approbation in this country, are not in reality as unjust, and will not be condemned by posterity as unanimously, as the revocation of the edict of Nantes, or any other of the most atrocious acts by which the pages of history are stained.

The remarkable analogy must strike even the most superficial observer, between the position of the Tories,

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35. Analogy between the situation of the Tories in the War of the Succession, and Whigs in that of the Revolution.

and the policy which they adopted during the contest of the Succession, and that which the Whigs occupied, and their conduct during the war of the Revolution. On both occasions, the Opposition was determinedly set against a war, which a ministry in power was carrying on with vigour and success against a preponderating power in France, that threatened, and had well-nigh overturned, the independence of all the adjoining states in Europe. In both, the contest was one of life or death for the liberties and even the existence of England; and yet the Opposition in both exerted their whole influence and abilities to mar its progress and impede its success. In both, a great and victorious English general headed the forces of the alliance; and in both, for a series of years, his successes were underrated, his achievements vilified, his efforts thwarted, by the Opposition in the very country whose glory he was daily augmenting, and securely establishing on a more durable foundation. In both, Great Britain was combating a power which had proved itself to be the deadliest enemy to real freedom, for it is hard to say whether Louis XIV.'s persecution of the Protestants, or the atrocities of the Convention at Paris a century after, inflicted the cruellest wounds on the cause of liberty. In both, the league of the Allies, though originally springing out of this unbearable oppression, had come to hinge mainly on the necessity of preventing the political power of France being extended over Spain. In both, the chief seats of war for the English and French armies

were Spain and the Low Countries; and in both, the decisive blows were at length struck on the Flemish plains.

36. Extraordinary coincidence in the crisis of the two contests.

And the crisis in both brings the parallel still closer, and to a most singular, and some may think almost providential, coincidence. For *in May* 1712, the Tories consummated the war on which they had so long been engaged, by effecting the separation of England from the alliance, when the iron barrier of France was at last effectually broken through, and nothing remained to prevent Marlborough and Eugene from marching in triumph to Paris; and *in May* 1812, just a hundred years after, the Whigs had the means put into their hands of effecting their long-desired pacification with France, by the Prince Regent sending for their leaders to form a ministry on the expiry of the year of restriction enforced on him by act of Parliament, on his assuming the power of King. If the Whigs had succeeded in forming a government at that period, if the apparently trivial dispute about the household appointments had not restored their opponents to power, there can be no doubt that a peace, similar to that of Utrecht, would have stopped the war for a time, and bequeathed its dangers and its burdens to another, perhaps the present age. And this was on the eve of the Salamanca campaign, at the opening of the Moscow expedition![*]

* "The negotiation between the Prince Regent and the Whigs was broken off on the 6th June, 1812. On the 13th of the same month, Wellington crossed the Portuguese frontier, and commenced the Salamanca campaign, while on the 23d Napoleon passed the Niemen, and perilled his crown and his life on the precarious issue of a Russian invasion."—ALISON'S *Europe*, chap. lxiv. § 45.

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37. Real causes of this identity of conduct of the opposite parties on these occasions.

It must appear, at first sight, not a little extraordinary, that conduct so precisely similar, and in both cases so diametrically at variance with the real interests of the country, should in this manner have been alternately pursued by the two great parties whose contests have for nearly two hundred years so entirely engrossed English domestic history. But the marvel ceases when their internal political situation is considered. In both cases, the Opposition who resisted the war and strove to arrest its progress, which was conducted with glory and success by their opponents, had recently before been dispossessed of power. The Tories, by the Revolution of 1688, had been so completely driven from the helm, that, as the event proved, they did not recover their ground for seventy years, and a change of dynasty at the time could alone secure them in it. The Whigs had, by the ministerial revolutions of 1784, been, after the most strenuous efforts on their part, so effectually dispossessed of power, that they had no prospect of recovering it, but by the national calamity of a failure in the war in which their antagonists were engaged. Thus, by a singular combination of circumstances, the two parties, at the interval of a century from each other, stood in precisely the same situation, so far as the foreign war and its reactions upon their domestic prospects was concerned. The interests of both were identified with the misfortunes of this country and the triumphs of its enemies. Their wishes, as is generally the case, followed in the same direction. The secret inclinations of the Tories, in the war of the Succession,

were with the court of St Germains, because its restoration to royalty would at once have replaced them at the helm; the secret wishes of the Whigs, in the war of the Revolution, were with the tricolor flag, because its triumphs would at once have ruined the Tories, and restored them to the much-coveted possession of power. In both cases the selfish prevailed over the generous, the party over the patriotic, feelings of our nature. In both the party in opposition were false to their country, but true, as they thought, at least to themselves. And both have obtained their just punishment by receiving the merited condemnation of succeeding times.

38. Excuses which existed for the policy of the Tories at the treaty of Utrecht from the dread of Spain.

Though the event, however, has decisively proved that Bolingbroke and Oxford judged wrong in detaching England from the Grand Alliance in 1712, and that their measures, by securing to France the family compact with the Spanish Bourbons, brought the country to the brink of ruin in 1782, yet it must be admitted, in their vindication, that plausible arguments were not awanting to justify the unpatriotic course which they adopted. Great as was the power of France in the time of Louis XIV., it was comparatively of recent growth. Serious as had been the perils of the nation from his ambition, it had been placed in yet greater danger by the enterprises of the Spanish monarchy. The terrors of the Armada were yet fresh in the minds of the people; the monarchy of Charles V. was the nearest approach to universal dominion which had been made since the days of Charlemagne. If the Whigs had succeeded in making Louis XIV. accept the terms offered to him by

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the Allies at Gertruydenberg in 1709, which they were within a hair-breadth of doing, the monarchy of Charles V. was reconstructed in favour of the Emperor of Germany, with an apparently considerable accession of power. The whole present dominions of Austria in Germany and Lombardy, Naples and Sicily, Flanders, Spain, and South America, would have constituted the hereditary dominions of a power to which the imperial crown would, as a matter of course, have come to be permanently united.

39. Bolingbroke's picture of the ruined state of the Spanish Monarchy at this period.

The Tories, however, in the time of Queen Anne, were too clear-sighted not to see that the danger from the Spanish monarchy, great as it had been a century before, had passed away before their time, and that France was the power by which the independence of England was really threatened. If circumstances had rendered the junction of the Spanish dominions to one or other unavoidable, it was evidently for the interest of Great Britain that it should be united to the distant and inland territories of the House of Austria, destitute of fleets and harbours, and constantly engrossed with wars with the Turks, rather than to the great and flourishing monarchy of France, with an extensive sea-coast, and a navy rivalling our own, in close vicinity, and actuated by a jealousy of England of many centuries' standing. Bolingbroke has shown that he perceived these obvious truths as clearly as any man, and consequently that the terrors expressed by the Tories on occasion of the peace of Utrecht, at the prospect of reconstructing the empire of Charles V., were hypocritical, and had been got up

to conceal objects fundamentally different. "Philip II." says he, "left his successors a ruined monarchy. He left them something worse; he left them his example and his principles of government, founded in ambition, pride, ignorance, bigotry, and all the pedantry of state. The war in the Low Countries cost him, by his own confession, five hundred and sixty-four millions, a prodigious sum, in whatever specie he reckoned. At home, there was much form, but no good order, no economy or wisdom of policy in the state. The Church continued to devour its resources; and that monster, the Inquisition, to dispeople the country, even more than perpetual war, and all the numerous colonies that Spain had sent out to the West Indies: for Philip III. drove more than nine hundred thousand Moriscoes out of his dominions by one edict, with such circumstances of inhumanity as the Spaniards alone could exercise, and that tribunal, which had provoked that unhappy race to revolt, could alone approve. Abroad, the conduct of that prince was directed by the same wild spirit of ambition. Rash in undertaking, though slow to execute, obstinate in pursuing, though unable to succeed, they opened a new sluice to let out the little life and vigour that remained in the monarchy. What completed their ruin was this, they knew not how to lose, nor when to yield. They acknowledged the independence of the Dutch commonwealth, and became the allies of their ancient subjects by the treaty of Munster; but they would not forego their usurped claims on Portugal, and they persisted in carrying on singly the war against France. *Thus they were-*

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reduced to such a lowness of power as can scarcely be paralleled in any other kingdom. As to France, this era of the *entire fall of the Spanish power* is likewise that from which we may reckon *that France grew as formidable as we have seen her* to her neighbours in power and pretensions." *

40. What course the Tories should have pursued at the treaty of Utrecht.

Notwithstanding all this, which subsequent events have proved to be entirely well founded, it is not surprising that the Tories, in the days of Queen Anne, paused before contributing to such a result, as the consequence of the national efforts during ten campaigns for the preservation of the balance of power in Europe. There were difficulties, and those too of a very serious nature, on all sides. They were right in their dread of reconstructing the monarchy of Charles V.; their great error consisted in the way they set about preventing it. They did this by giving Spain and the Indies to a Bourbon prince, which at once closely united two great *maritime* powers, far more formidable to Britain than the union of one of these with the *inland* and far-severed monarchy of Charles V. ever could have been. What they should have done, was to have given the crown of Spain and the Indies to the Austrian Archduke, but to have stipulated that it should never be placed on the same head as the imperial crown, or on that which wore the diadem of the hereditary dominions in Germany. But though this would have preserved the balance of power, it would not have answered their secret views for rescuing Louis XIV. from his difficulties, in order to

* Bolingbroke *On the Study of History, Let.* 6. *Works*, iii. 464, 465.

prop the exiled throne of St Germains. Thence it was that they preferred all the risks of leaving Spain and the Indies in the hands of a Bourbon prince, the result of which, seventy years afterwards, brought England to the verge of ruin in consequence. Thence it is that they have incurred the merited condemnation of all subsequent ages.

41. But no excuse can be found for our violation of the Treaty of Utrecht by the Quadruple Alliance in 1834.

It is difficult, however, to see even a plausible reason on the surface of things for the conduct of Great Britain in 1834, in violating the treaty of Utrecht, and forming the Quadruple Alliance with France, for the purpose of dispossessing the *male* line, which she had herself established in Spain, as a security against its crown falling into the hands of a French prince, and establishing the *female* succession in its stead. Was it that the experience of the preceding forty years had shown that revolutionary dynasties were so very stable, that it was necessary to violate our faith plighted at Utrecht, in order to establish a lasting democratic sovereign power in the Peninsula? Was it that revolutionary governments had been found by experience to be so strict and honourable in their dealings, so correct and punctual in their payments, so abhorrent to any thing like repudiation of debts, that it was for the interest of the commercial and money-lending state to uphold their establishment? Was it that the annals of the French Revolution had demonstrated that the universal suffrage by which the Spanish Cortes was elected, was so very safe and workable a state engine, that it might securely be intrusted to the fiery passions of Spain,

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in its apprenticeship to freedom? Was it that we were so very secure, that a Queen or Princess of Spain, heiress presumptive to the throne, would not attract the notice and win the regard of a prince of France; and that thus the slender security provided even by the treaty of Utrecht against the union of the two crowns on the same head, might not be entirely destroyed? Was it that French princes had been proved by history to be so singularly repulsive in their manners, or ungainly in their appearance, that there was no risk of their attracting the notice of the heiress of Spain? We know not what the motive was which led this nation to interfere in breaking through the male succession as settled by the treaty of Utrecht, and establishing the female line in its stead. We know only that the thing was done, and by ourselves. It is for the authors of the Quadruple Alliance of 1834 to explain its motives, and point out its advantages.

42. Answer to the common argument used in behalf of the Quadruple Alliance.

The common argument used on this head, viz., that the young Queen, to whom the crown of Spain had been bequeathed by Ferdinand VII., had been acknowledged by the Cortes and constitutional authorities in Spain, and that we, a constitutional monarchy, could not oppose a sovereign of the people's choice, is obviously devoid of foundation. The settlement of the crown of Spain on the male line, by the treaty of Utrecht, was a *public act* guaranteed by *all the powers of Europe*, for purposes of general policy, and the preservation of the balance of power. It was meant to guard against the precise danger which has since occurred, viz., the

marriage of a Spanish princess, heiress presumptive to the throne, to a prince of France. Serious deliberations, a Congress of all the powers which had signed the treaty of Utrecht, were requisite, before the main security it provided against the dangers which had rendered the War of the Succession necessary was abandoned. But nothing of that sort was thought of. The thing was done at once, without either congress or deliberation, and in defiance of a solemn protest by Don Carlos, as the head of the male line, against such an invasion of his rights and those of his family. The northern powers of Europe have never yet recognised the female line in Spain. And yet the English nation never seems to have been awakened to the impolicy, as well as bad faith, of these proceedings, till a Spanish princess, as the result to be naturally expected from such a splendid endowment of English creation, dropt into the arms of a prince of France.

43. Our active interference to put down Don Carlos and the male line was still more unjustifiable.

But the matter does not rest here. It would be well for the honour and future fate of England if it did. We not only recognised the Queen of Spain in defiance of the treaty of Utrecht, but we concluded with France the Quadruple Alliance, to uphold her and the Queen of Portugal on the throne, in opposition to the male and legitimate line in both countries. We followed this up by an armed intervention, to put down the Carlists and Royalists in the northern provinces. Lord John Hay was sent with the royal marines; General Evans was *allowed* to go with ten thousand volunteers, armed with Tower muskets, and in the scarlet uniform. War-

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like stores, to the amount of £450,000, were sent to Queen Christina in the space of three years. We thus succeeded, after a dreadful civil war of four years' duration, in beating down the heroic mountaineers in the Basque provinces, and fixing a dynasty hateful to nine-tenths of the Spanish nation on the throne of Madrid. Was this non-intervention? Was this following up the principles of our Revolution, that every nation may choose its own dynasty? Did we not rather imitate the conduct of Louis XIV., who, for twenty years, strove to impose the Chevalier St George and the Stuart line on an unwilling people? Can there be a doubt, that if the Spaniards and Portuguese had been *let alone* by France and England, the revolutionary dynasty of queens, with all its attendant dangers of French princes, would long since have been sunk to the earth in both parts of the Peninsula? If not, why did we interfere and nourish for four long years a frightful civil war on the Ebro? In concluding the Quadruple Alliance, and aiding the Spanish revolutionists to establish a queen upon the throne of Madrid, we forced a hated dynasty upon an unwilling nation, as much as the Allies did, when, in 1815, they restored the Bourbons to the throne of France by the force of English and Prussian bayonets. And we acted not less in opposition to the principles of our own Revolution, than to the national faith pledged at Utrecht, or the plainest national interests, demonstrated by the most important events of the subsequent period.

What we should have done is quite plain. It was prescribed alike by national faith and public expedience.

44. What England should have done on the occasion.

We should have done what Cardinal Mazarine did during the English, Mr Pitt during the early part of the French, Revolution. We should have interfered *neither in favour of the one party nor the other*; but preserving a strict neutrality, recognised and continued the national treaties with that government which the nation ultimately adopted, as the one suited to the wishes, and protective of the interests, of the majority of its inhabitants. If driven by necessity to interfere, it should have been in support of that line of descent which our own security and the interests of Europe required, and the faith of treaties guaranteed, rather than of that which endangered the former and violated the latter. We did none of these things. We interfered by the weight of diplomacy and the force of arms to force a hateful democratic regime upon a people whose hearts were essentially monarchical; and we succeeded in establishing a government at Madrid against the wishes of nine-tenths of the people of the country.

45. Just punishment we have now received.

We now see the result. We have received our just punishment in beholding the consummation of the Montpensier alliance, and the dream of Louis XIV. and Napoleon realised, by the extension of French influence from the Scheldt to Gibraltar. At one blow we have undone the whole work of the Wars of the Succession and Revolution. We have lost, by a single act, the fruit of the victories of Marlborough and the triumphs of Wellington. The barrier in the Netherlands, the counterpoise in the Peninsula, have been alike lost, or rather their weight has been added to the power of our

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enemies. England sees clearly enough *now* the erroneous policy in which her rulers have got themselves involved, and the manner in which they have played into the hands of our enemies; but she does not see as yet where the fault really lay, and of what we really ought to be ashamed. She is ashamed of having been deceived, but not of having been the deceiver. It is for the latter, however, she should really feel humiliation. To be duped in negotiation, or outdone in love, is no unusual occurrence; diplomatic cunning is frequently the resource of the weak against the strong, of the perfidious against the unsuspecting. To break treaties, oppress allies, and foment direful civil wars, for the propagation of political opinions, or supposed party advantages; these are the real offences for which nations must answer, and which call down a righteous retribution upon their rulers and themselves.

46. England has lost all title to complain of any violation of the treaty of Utrecht.

By the course which [illegible] as of late years adopted in regard to Sp[illegible] deprived herself of all title to complain, even of a real violation of the treaty of Utrecht by any other power. Having set the first example of violating its provisions, in the essential article of the succession to the throne, she can no longer with effect upbraid France for infringement of it in inferior particulars. But in truth Louis Philippe, in the Montpensier marriage, violated none of the provisions of the treaty of Utrecht; whether he deviated from any promises made at the Chateau d'Eu, is a matter of comparatively little importance, concerning which the statesmen of the two countries are at variance. There

is no prohibition in the treaty of Utrecht of the marriage of French princes with Spanish princesses, or *vice versa*; there is not a word said about such marriages at all. It was as unnecessary as it would have been ungracious; for when the succession to the crown of Madrid was strictly entailed on heirs male, no prince of the French blood, by marrying an Infanta of Spain, could endanger the peace of Europe by succeeding, through her, to the throne. Accordingly, numerous instances have since occurred of such marriages, without their having excited any attention, or been ever deemed infringements of the treaty of Utrecht.*

But when England joined with France in 1834 to alter the order of succession in Spain, and to force a dynasty of Queens, surrounded by Republican institutions, on an unwilling people, the case was entirely

* Such marriages between French princes and Spanish princesses took place on the 21st January, 1721, and the 25th August 1739; and on the 23d Janu[illegible] Dauphin of France married the princess who, but for [illegible] Utrecht excluding the female line, would have been [illegible] crown of Spain. But on none of these occasions was it [illegible] supposed any infringement of the treaty of Utrecht had taken place, or any danger to the balance of power in Europe had occurred. Nay, Louis XV. was publicly, and with the knowledge of the whole of Europe, affianced, early in life, to the Infanta of Spain; the Spanish princess was brought and lived long at Versailles, in order to be initiated into the duties of French royalty; and the match was at length broken off, not from any remonstrance on the part of the English ambassador or the diplomatic body in Europe, but because the princess being six years younger than the French king, who was nineteen years of age, his subjects were too impatient for his marriage—were too impatient to wait till it could with propriety be solemnised; and he married, in consequence, Maria Leckzinska, daughter of the King of Poland. See De Tocqueville's *Hist. de Louis XV.*, i. p. 172.

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altered. The marriage of a Prince of France with an Infanta of Spain became then a matter of the very highest importance; it threatened the precise danger which the War of the Succession was undertaken to avert; which the treaty of Utrecht was concluded, though in an imperfect manner, to prevent. There is, indeed, in that treaty the most express prohibition against the crowns of France and Spain being united on the same head; but that is neither the real danger to be dreaded, nor has England left herself any means of preventing it. It is the "Family Alliance" now concluded which is the real evil; and if the succession to the Spanish crown should open to the French king, in consequence of it, how could we, who, in defiance of the treaty of Utrecht, have opened to the Infanta the succession to the throne, object to his ascending it? We have fallen into the pit which we ourselves dug; we have been punished by the work of our own hands: another among the numerous proofs which contemporary as well as past history affords, that there is a moral superintendence of the affairs of men, and that great violations of national duty work out, in the national consequences to which they lead, a just retribution upon the third and fourth generations.

17. Great change which the substitution of the female line for the male in Spain made in this respect on the interests of other powers.

THE END.

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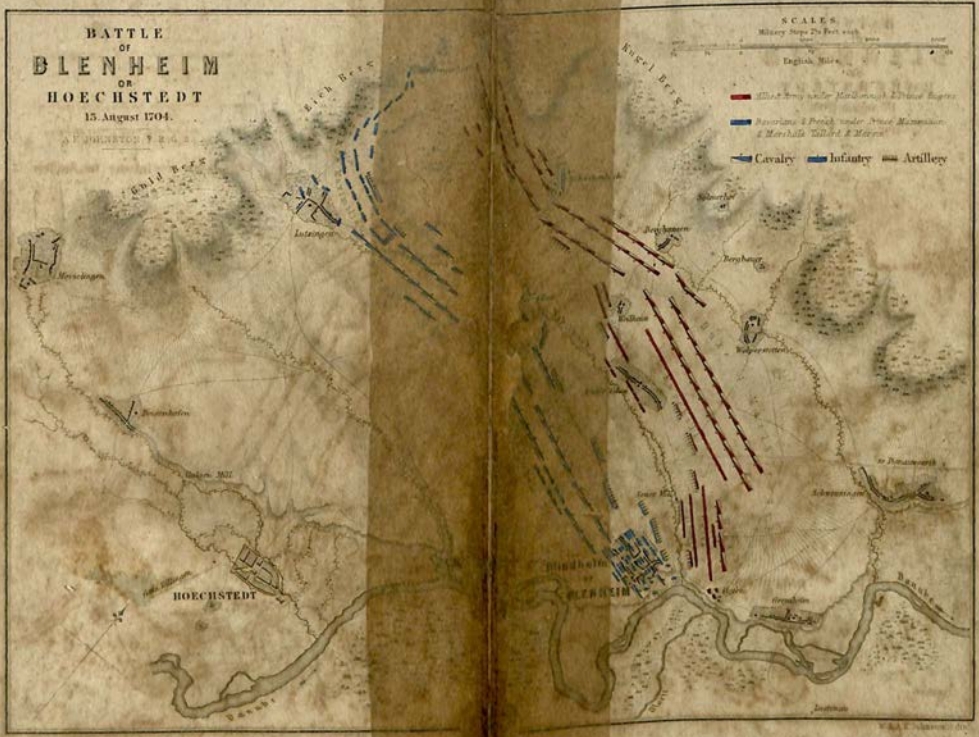
BATTLE
OF
BLENHEIM
OR
HOECHSTEDT
15. August 1704.
SCALES
English Miles
Cavalry
Infantry
Artillery
Eich Berg
Gold Berg
Kugel Berg
Lutzingen
Merselingen
Donauhofen
Gulden Mill
HOECHSTEDT
Danube
Blindheim
BLENHEIM
Bergheim
Bergbauer
Wolpertstetten
Schwenningen
Danube
Gerstheim
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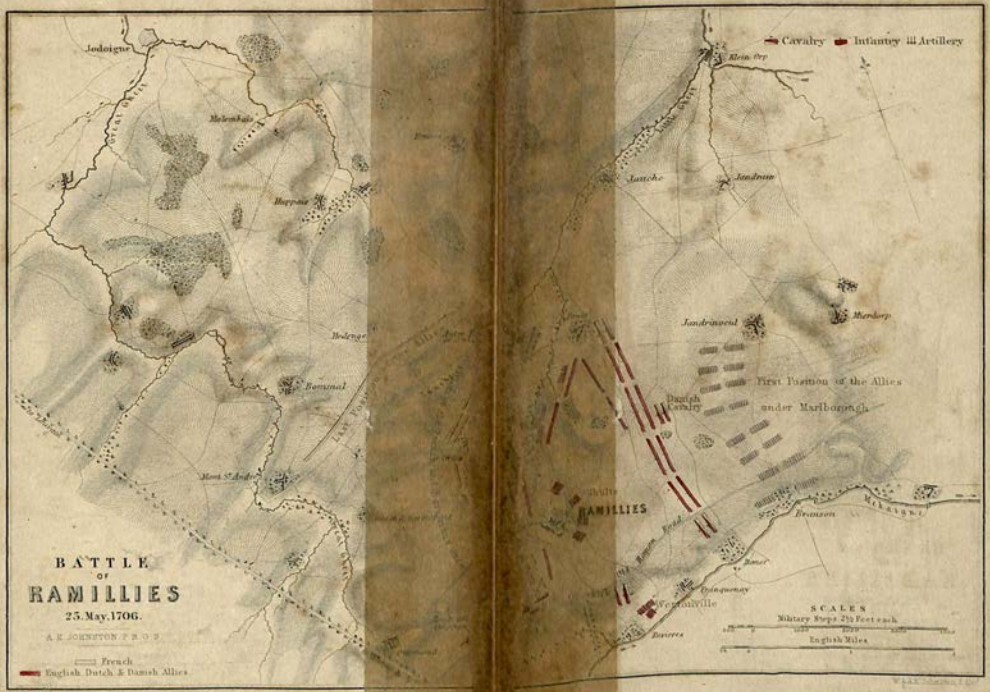
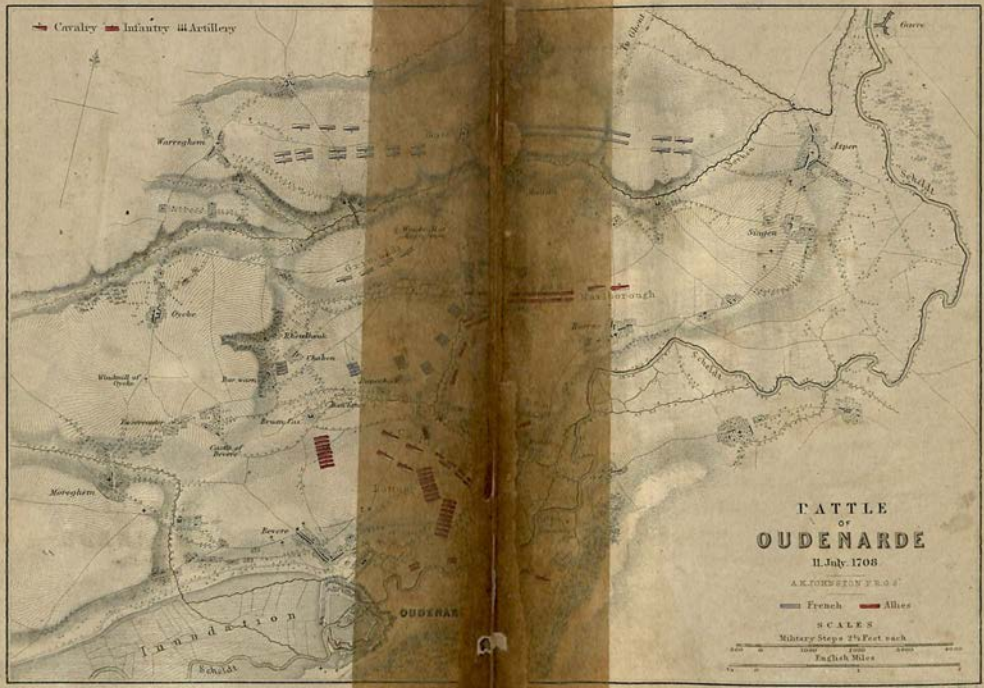
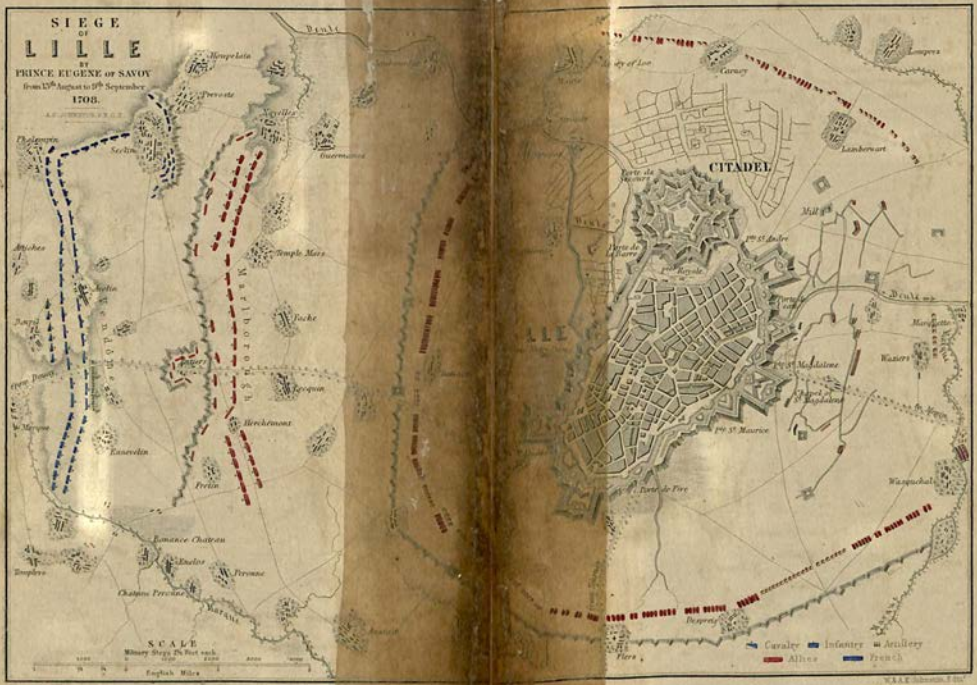
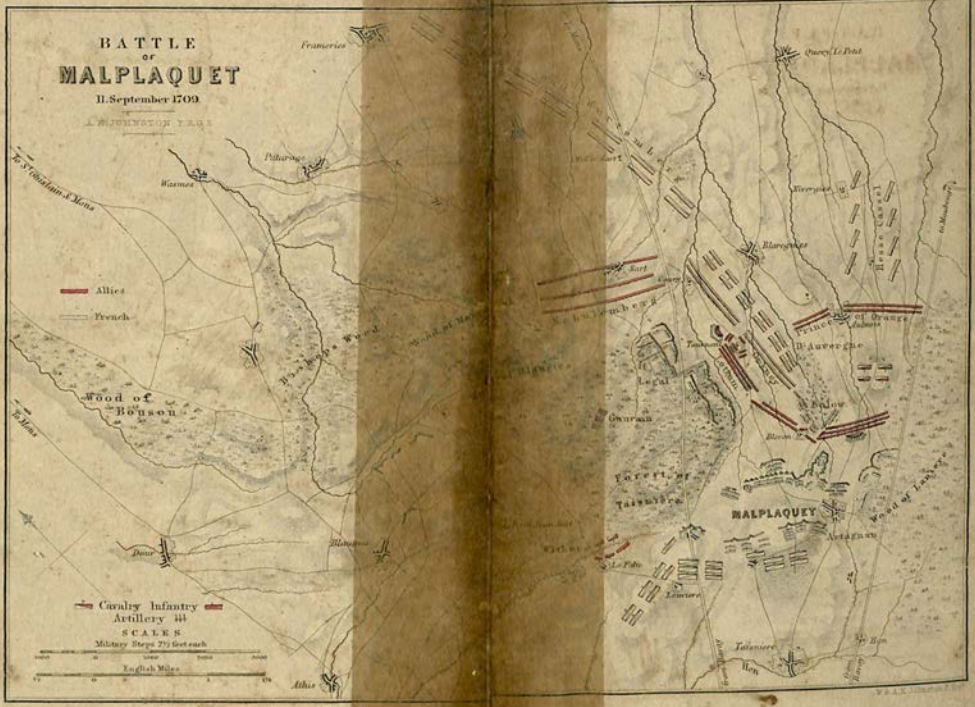

BATTLE
OF
RAMILLIES
23. May. 1706.
A. K. JOHNSTON F.R.G.S.
French
English Dutch & Danish Allies
Cavalry
Infantry
Artillery
Jodoigne
Great Gheet
Malembais
Huppais
Bedenge
Bommal
Mont St Andre
Last Position
Klein Orp
Little Gheet
Jauche
Jandrain
Jandrinoeul
Merdorp
First Position of the Allies
under Marlborough
Danish
Cavalry
RAMILLIES
Old Roman Road
Branson
Mehaigne
Bonef
Tranquenay
Wemmeville
Taviers
SCALES
Military Steps 2½ Feet each
English Miles


Cavalry
Infantry
Artillery
Warreghem
Oyeke
Chaken
Bar wam
Brum Fas
Castle of Bevere
Moreghem
Bevere
Inundation
Scheldt
OUDENARDE
Marlborough
Asper
Singen
Scheldt
Gisere
To Ghent
PATTLE
OF
OUDENARDE
11. July. 1708
A.K. JOHNSTON F.R.G.S.
French
Allies
SCALES
Military Steps 2½ Feet each
English Miles


SIEGE
OF
LILLE
BY
PRINCE EUGENE OF SAVOY
from 13th August to 9th September
1708.
Deule
Hempelain
Prevoste
Neuvelles
Guermanes
Seclin
Chalempin
Attiches
Templo Mars
Marlborough
Vendôme
Fache
Lattiers
Cecquin
Herchémont
Ennevelin
Frelin
Romance Chateau
Enclos
Peronne
Chateau Peronne
Marque
Templeve
SCALE
Military Steps 2½ Feet each
English Miles
Carnoy
Lambernart
CITADEL
Porte de Secours
Porte de la Barre
Mill
Pte St André
Pte Royale
Deule
Marquette
Waziers
Pte St Magdalene
Chapel St Magdalene
Pte St Maurice
Porte de Fire
Wasquehal
Despreis
Flers
Cavalry
Infantry
Artillery
Allies
French


BATTLE
OF
MALPLAQUET
11. September 1709.
Allies
French
Cavalry Infantry
Artillery
SCALES
Military Steps 2½ feet each
English Miles
Frameries
Pataraga
Wasmes
Wood of Bouson
Dour
Athis
Blaregnies
Nivergnies
Query Le Petit
Sart
Nebulembers
Prince of Orange
D'Auverghe
Legal
Gaucain
Forest of Tassniere
MALPLAQUEY
Wood of Lanieres
Tassniere
Hen
Lanciere
Le Pilu
Blaron
Sulow
Hesse Cassel

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on 02 April, 2016